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BLUEPRINT

ACALANES A2000

Building the Future of Acalanes

*A sneak peek at the new
campus plans... pg.5*

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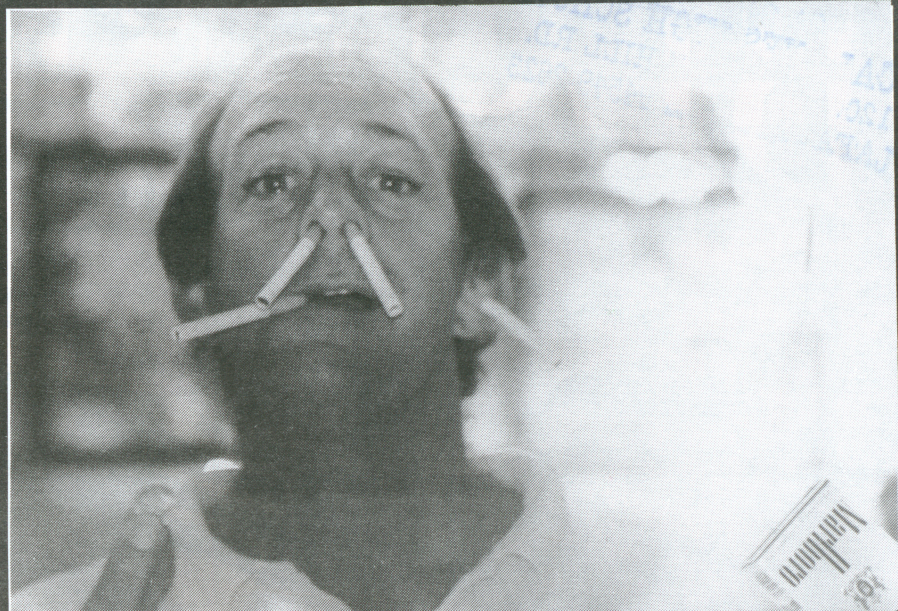
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ON THE COVER: Architects provide a computerized rendition of the expected results of the current construction on the upper 400's hallway.

Photo of the Issue



Blueprint Photo/Joanna Dahlhauser

Mr. Freeman casually strolls through flavor country, facetiously asking students for a light. After finding a pack of cigarettes on the ground in the 400's hall, he stuck multiple cigarettes in his facial cavities to make a public statement about his dislike for smoking.

Blueprint '99-'00

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ACALANES BLUEPRINT NEWS

INSIDE



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DRESS CODE

Acalanes Dons' Dress Not Up To Code

By Kevin Medeiros
Staff Writer

While walking around campus you may be noticing ringed belly buttons, stomach hairs, flab and abs, and not a few underwear brands, but according to administrators, there is a dress code at Acalanes.

Students have slowly loosened their attitudes as well as their belts on the dress code in the past few years. Three years ago students began showing off spaghetti straps and now mid-ribs are the bare buzz. By wearing these new styles students have broken one of the main rules of the dress code: no undergarments or bare stomachs may be shown at any time.

The conflict is that wearing a pair of pants too low or wearing a shirt too small to show off your underwear or brand of underwear is becoming a growing fad among students.

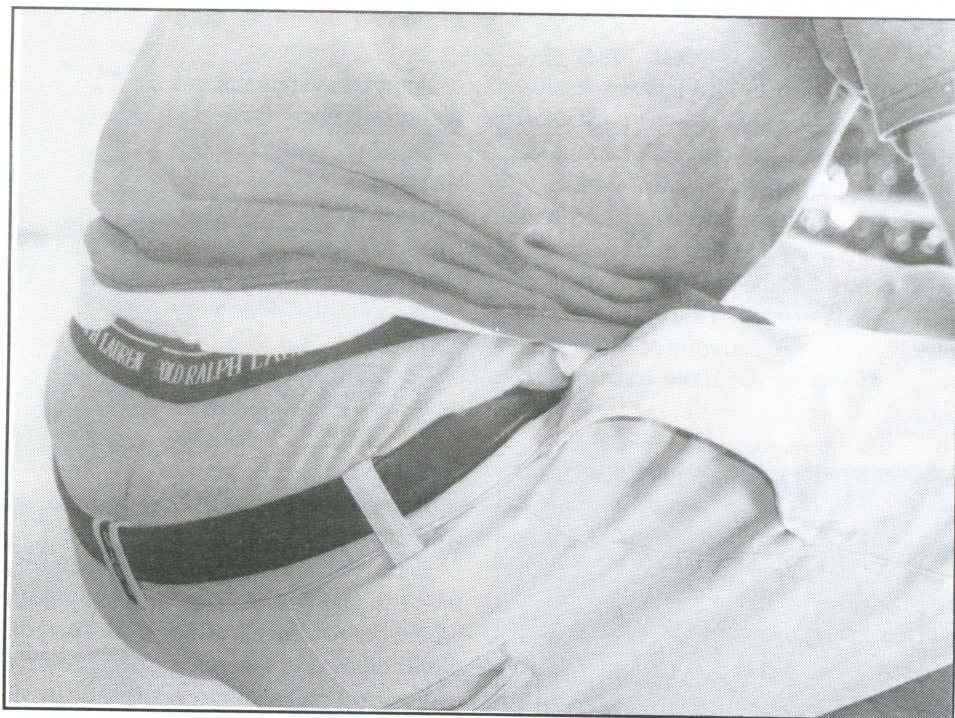
"It has to be Polo or Tommy," said senior John Houlberg.

The problem with showing off your underwear is that "the bottom of the top and the top of the bottom have to meet or it is a violation," said Principal Keith Schmidt.

Many students either do not know the dress code or choose to ignore it. A student who wished to remain anonymous said, "I think the dress code is stupid, so I just wear what I want."

The code, according to Schmidt, is that, "The torso which is defined as from about the mid thigh up to the shoulders must be covered...and we don't want clothing that promotes tobacco, alcohol, or drugs," he said.

The rules in place applies to all students, not just the females. Schmidt



Blueprint Photo/Joanna Dalhauser

Senior John Houlberg bares his assets, deliberately violating the school's strict new dress code.

said, "We don't want bare bellies whether it is boys or girls." That means a male student, if wearing a shirt that is showing his stomach, can also be pulled aside and told to put a sweater on or some other clothing with which to cover up. If he doesn't have anything he may borrow a shirt from an administrator, said Schmidt.

The punishments for violations may be as insignificant as turning a shirt inside out or putting on a sweater. For repeat offenders, according to administrators, it will result in a suspension.

Despite the violations students say that teachers and administrators don't really care and they barely ever pull students aside and make them

change. It does happen occasionally, but when it does students usually try to stretch their shirt to touch the top of their pants so they are not in violation.

In response Schmidt said that the school is not trying to limit personal style but it is trying to limit classroom distractions such as lack of clothes. He also said if certain types of clothes are a distraction he will be forced to limit them as well.

The dress code also stipulates that if a student wears a transparent shirt (even if it covers the stomach area) he or she still can be punished. In the student handbook it is written that "See-through or fishnet fabrics ... are prohibited."

RALLY CONTROVERSY

Welcome Rally Receives Mixed Reviews

By Blake Koelmel and
Charlie Massie
Staff Writers

Students and faculty left the Sep. 17 Welcome Rally with mixed feelings.

While many people entered the large gym in awe of the elaborate decorations, some left disappointed by the lack of organization, and others were offended.

Among the rally's viewers, biology teacher Lori Tewsbury was particularly upset by the content of the skit about four Latino guys trying to "pick up" women.

"I was completely offended," said Tewsbury. "I was so offended that I walked up to Mr. Schmidt in the middle of the rally and said, 'This has to stop.' I felt like it was completely insulting to anyone of Mexican descent, of which we have many at this school."



An energetic freshman participates in a balloon-popping relay during the rally.

Some students were also offended by the events of the "Hola"-themed Welcome Rally.

"I would have been really embarrassed had some of my Latin American friends witnessed the rally," said senior Lisa Smithy.

Many other students and faculty members were not as offended. Senior Eric Lee said it was less the ethnic theme and more the lack of organization that he disliked about the rally.

"I thought it was very unprepared," said Lee. "I could tell that the people who were speaking did not know what they were supposed to be saying, and I could not hear what they were saying half of the time."

Because of unorganized and "offensive" past rallies like the "new teacher rally," where new teachers had milk dumped on them without prior warning, a new pre-rally procedure was established last year. It stipulates that Leadership Advisor Rod Keillor preview the rally script and that a practice rally be held for anyone to view.

According to Keillor and ASB President James Applebury, a rehearsal was held and Keillor previewed and edited the first draft. He did not see the second draft due to time constraints. Keillor believes that the root of the problem, however, was a lack of organization.

"The general time management was not its best, the skit was not the most organized, and they needed to rehearse more," said Keillor. "Also, some of the actors may have gotten a bit carried away."

Rally Board Head Lauren Mackenzie was upset that several people had criticized the rally so harshly. She said that the audience doesn't appreciate the time involved to set up for the rally performance.

"You don't know how much time we put into preparing for this rally," said Mackenzie.



"The Don," a.k.a. Sabrina Gaber, pumps up the crowd.

Mackenzie also said that the intention was not to target people of Mexican ethnicity but rather to show "dumb foreigners in a Mexican environment."

"If we offended people we are sorry, but let's put it in perspective," said Mackenzie. "You hear worse stuff in (some classes)."

Sophomore Jonathan Canton, who is of Mexican ethnicity, said that he was not offended and that the skit was even somewhat accurate.

"It was all in good fun," said Canton. "It's not like there were any racial slurs or anything. Besides, I thought it was pretty funny with the whole Mexican pick-up scene because it is actually kind of true."

There seems to be a general consensus among students and faculty that rallies should stay away from ethnic-oriented skits, and instead should focus on finding entertaining ways to promote school spirit.

"There is a point at which skits go too far," said senior Eddy Ng. "'Lance and Luke' was borderline. (The 'Lance and Luke' skit from many rallies last year also portrayed two foreigners.) I just think that rallies should try to stay away from ethnic themes in the future."

CONSTRUCTION

Acalanes Campus: A Work In Progress

By Scott Schwertscharf and
Philippe Peyron
Staff Writers

While construction of a new two-story wing of classrooms is underway at Acalanes, there is still confusion and uncertainty surrounding the development of the performing arts theater, an upcoming phase of the district's school modernization program.

AUHSD Assistant Superintendent



Blueprint Photo/Sophia Maund

Fences surrounding the construction site keep students safe from hazards.

Larry Larson said that the classroom construction is on schedule and "exactly where we expected to be at this point last year." The construction of the new classrooms started at the end of the 1998-1999 school year and is scheduled to be finished by April.

Principal Keith Schmidt said that the new classrooms, being built to relieve high enrollment and provide for class size reduction, will be larger than current ones and will have air conditioning. They will be located at the end of the 300's and 400's hallways. In addition to a stairway, there will be an elevator at one end of the two-story classroom

building to make the classes accessible to handicapped students. A new restroom complex will also be built in the new hall.

Although there is optimism about finishing the construction on time, there are many obstacles that could delay the completion of the project.

"Between now and April there is a winter," said Schmidt. During the winter months construction could easily be set back by bad weather. Schmidt also said that there is the possibility of problems such as material shortages or labor difficulties.

Schmidt hopes that the portables, currently in the parking lot, will not be needed after this school year. This is welcome news for many Acalanes students who struggle to find parking in the crowded area around campus.

In 1997, the community passed a \$48 million bond measure for modernization programs, which in Acalanes is allocated to the new wing and fine arts theater.

The plans for the new theater have been in development since last year, and they have been a source of debate. The original plan called for leaving the present drama building intact, and building a new theater alongside it. Because of financial concerns, a second plan in which the current theater would be demolished and replaced with one new theater was also developed.

In a district letter released earlier this year, the two-theater plan had a projected cost of \$6,427,237 while the estimated cost of the one-theater plan was \$5,485,278.

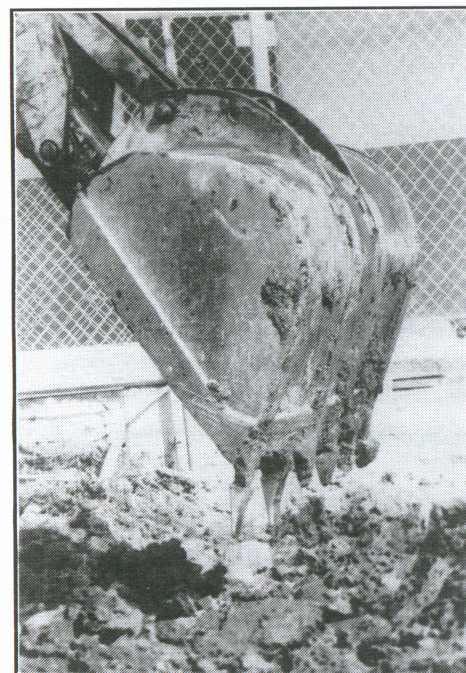
Both Larson and Schmidt said that the theater designs have not yet been decided. Schmidt said that the theater plans are "not on the schedule that we hoped for and are not yet underway." Schmidt still hopes to begin construction on the theater in late spring.

Drama teacher Tom Eggertsen feels that the single-theater plan would be

damaging to the drama department, and not financially feasible.

"It doesn't make sense to tear down a building that is already existing," said Eggertsen. Eggertsen indicated that he was under the impression that the district had reviewed both plans and had decided to build two theaters.

Because of the district's inability to agree on a cost-effective theater plan, there are worries that funds are already



Blueprint Photo/Will McCosker

A bulldozer digs into Acalanes ground. The sight of construction equipment is common.

being drained in the development stage. However, Larson said, "(The planning) does not cost money, but it does cost time."

Larson said he is positive that there will be enough funds to complete the construction of the theater.

"We don't promise that we can do something that we can't reasonably expect... to build," said Larson.

Larson added, "\$48 million is a lot of money, but it is not unlimited, and it will only go so far. We have to be sure that we stay within the bounds of what we have. The theater is not going to have gold ceilings."

CAMPO SUSPENSION

Campo Suspension Prompts Controversy

By Nathalie de Leon and
Hannah Hens-Piazza
News Editor and Co-Editor-in-Chief

After discovering an inflammatory web site, the Campolindo administration suspended its student creator for five days on the grounds that the site, *camposux.com*, was disruptive to the school environment.

The disciplinary action and removal of the web site from the net by Freeservers, the web site server company of *camposux.com*, has prompted the creation of a second, student-generated web site filled with messages criticizing the Campolindo administration and charging them with violating free speech rights.

The initial anti-Campolindo themed web site contained a message board where students could post essays on various topics, including allegations that certain teachers and administrators are molesters, insulting statements about faculty, a cougar pawprint reading "CAMPOSUX", defamatory pictures of teachers and administrators on nude bodies, and various e-mails complaining about students, according to several students who viewed the site.

The originator was suspended for the nature of the content of the web site.

"He was not suspended for *making* a web site," said AUHSD Associate Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen. "There are things in many web sites that are not appropriate...and look to us like they are jeopardizing someone's safety."

The Campolindo administration declined to comment on the issue.

According to VanderMolen, an unidentified person phoned Freeservers, the company that hosted the web site, complaining about *camposux.com*. Freeservers then put the site out of service.

"We became aware that the site existed. It violated our Acceptable Use Policy, and we took it offline," said

Freeservers Abuse Department Spokesperson Brian Gibb.

The Freeservers Acceptable Use Policy stipulates that unacceptable content includes nudity, pornography, adult content, sex, and foul language.

"The policy is intentionally broad because we want to protect our business interests," said Gibb. "(The general policy is that) we try to avoid letting a young person stumble across something they shouldn't see."

Student responses to the suspension varied. Campo senior Tommy Renno said he didn't think the material on the site was inappropriate from a student perspective. He described the site as "a place to voice student opinions," and said any student could submit articles on any subject.

"Sometimes people wrote about things that they were mad about in the article section," he said.

Renno also said he was disappointed in the way the administration handled the creator's suspension and that he wished administrators had communicated more with students about the reasons for the suspension. Almost ev-

ery class at Campo discussed the matter, though, he said.

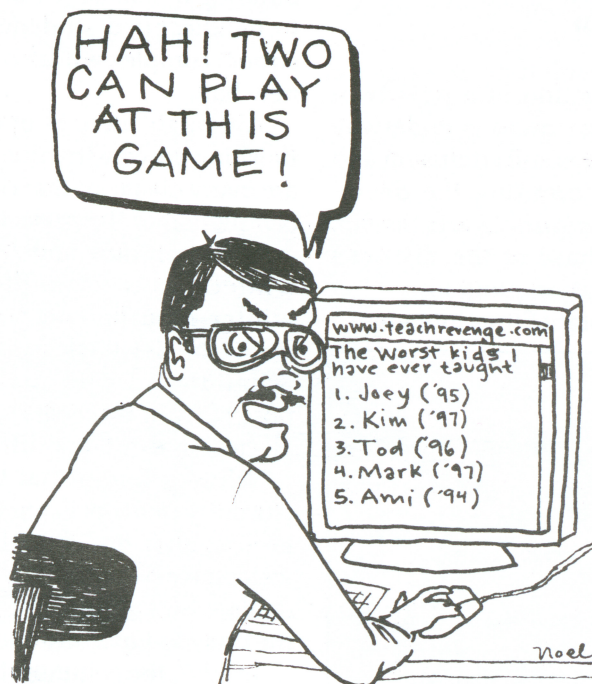
Campo World History teacher Sharon Bartlett was among the teachers who had class discussions about the suspension. Bartlett said she had not heard about the web site in much depth until it was shut down. After hearing more specific information about the content from different sources, she said, "In terms of First Amendment rights and freedom of speech, we are guaranteed liberty. We are not guaranteed license."

Bartlett said the school could have sued for libel, but added that in that situation, the parents would have had to pay the price. "I think the school handled the situation very appropriately," she said.

Acalanes junior Joe DeCosta thinks that the administration should not have suspended the student.

"If it was something he was doing at home, they should talk to his parents and have (them) deal with it," said DeCosta. "The school administration has no right to do what they did."

The district administration contends



Blueprint Illustration/Noel Fadden

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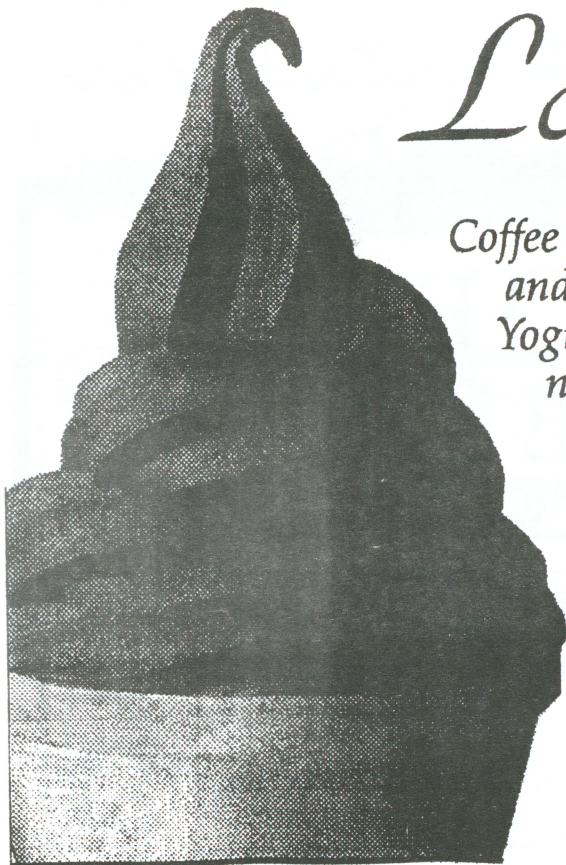
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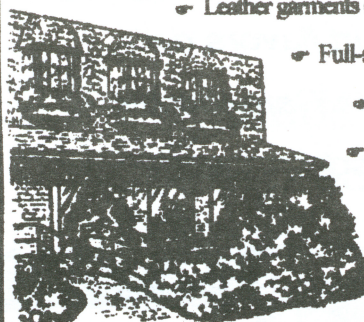
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CAMPO SUSPENSION

that it did have the right to impose punitive measures on the student because of the web site's relation to the school.

"An activity of this nature, because of what was on the web page, is definitely suspendable," said Vander-Molen. "We have worked with our attorneys to make sure that we were doing the right thing."

District Lawyer Nancy Boerne declined to comment.

Because of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the district said it could not divulge specific reasons for the suspension, although other sources indicated it was probably due to the site causing a disruption in the order of school.

Acalanes Principal Keith Schmidt said that if a student promotes defamation of character of school faculty, the district and school are not detached from the issue, even if the student's actions are off-campus and not during school time. (According to Renno, the site was created in August before school started.)

"You could think of (the school name) as sort of a brand name.... When you use the school's name, you target a specific school," said Schmidt.

The legality of the district's decision to discipline a student for off-campus activities has sparked debate among legal experts.

Lawyer Raymond Gong, who tries libel cases, believes that the district's actions were probably legally justified.

"(The administration is) acting for the benefit of the school," said Gong. "If you are... disrupting classes, even if you are exercising free speech rights... then I think (the administration has) the right to do something about it."

Gong said that if a student's actions interfere with "the kind of environment that is conducive to learning," the school has the prerogative to discipline that student.

He went on to say that, based on his knowledge of the web site's content, "the type of speech (the authors of *camposux.com*) engaged in goes beyond slander because the web page is a publication. They've committed an act of li-

bel."

According to ACLU spokesperson Nancy Otto, students have very extensive free speech rights in California.

"A school cannot censor web site material made outside of school unless it contains sexually explicit, obscene, or defamatory material" regarding the school, said Otto. The administration can talk to the student about the matter if it does not meet those requirements, but no punitive action should be taken.

Whether the material qualifies as "defamatory" is usually determined by a lawyer, according to Otto. If the decision is left up to the school principal, she thinks he would most likely consult a lawyer. "Defamatory is a very high standard," said Otto, "and its definition is often unclear."

Another legal authority agreed. National Crime Prevention Council spokesperson Jean O'Neil said that the district did the right thing, and that the courts would probably uphold their actions.

"This is not something where there's a lot of case law to begin with, but the courts have held that schools can regulate certain activities off school grounds," said O'Neil.

O'Neil also said that the issue the administration should be focusing on is the student's motive for creating the web site.

"I would be more concerned about why this person felt that... it was a good thing to put this web site up," said O'Neil. "I hope this person is getting some help."

A new web site, aimed at criticizing the Campolindo administration in a more civil manner, has been created since the protest. Entitled the "Campolindo High School 'Student' Message Board," the site allows students to voice their opinions on school issues but asks that they refrain from using profanity.

Although the site was riddled with profanity and harsh criticisms when it first opened, the most recent entries have toned down. Gibb said that he has not looked at the site, but if inappropriate language is the only

violation, Freeservers probably will not take it offline, as long as it is not excessive.

"We rarely take off a page for foul language alone," said Gibb.

One student who did not post a name on the site said, "...The fact of the matter is that they (the administration) are very shallow and only concerned and preoccupied with the thoughts of the parents in this small nothing community."

Most of the posted messages were signed "Anonymous" or only had initials. One student wrote, "The school administration seems to have the misconception that at school our rights should be limited. Wouldn't it seem that a government funded school would be the best place to have our rights protected?"

Another message, in response to the "Please no slanderous remarks" statement at the beginning of the site, read, "Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't this site for free speech? Isn't it supporting the actions of the suspended student? Are you saying that if one slanders here that it is inappropriate yet the slander on the controversial site is not?"

There were also numerous messages exchanged between people or groups calling themselves the "Republican Front" and the "Liberal Backlash." The Republican Front asserted that it believes in "the first and the rest of the living documents this great nation was founded on. Hence our support for Campo's fight."

The two supposedly opposing groups reached a consensus through their messages on the topic of student rights. Both strongly believe in a student's right to free speech.

Bartlett, who has not visited the new site, also supports First Amendment rights, but believes there are boundaries.

"I think freedom of speech is wonderful," she said, "but if the only point is to see how much you can get away with, then it's just really sad."

AP CLASSES

AP Standards Down, Enrollment Up

By Peter Deng
Copy Editor

The Acalanes School Board's new open enrollment policy allowed students who were not eligible for this year's AP classes to take the classes regardless of their GPA's or their performances on entrance tests.

Acalanes students who applied and were not accepted into Advanced Placement and honors courses received a letter over the summer inviting them to re-apply-part of a new strategy to help Acalanes students be more competitive for UC admissions.

Toward the end of the last school year, some students requesting AP classes were turned away because their grade point averages were not 3.5 or higher or their performances on district authorized screening tests were not deemed sufficient by AP teachers. That requirement was dropped due to a new district-wide policy encouraging open enrollment.

"A letter was sent home to all the students who had applied to take AP that didn't get in, saying that they would have the opportunity to take it after all," said Dr. Johanna VanderMolen, the superintendent of curriculum and assessment.

Dated June 27, 1999, the letter sent by Acalanes Principal Keith Schmidt to those who were not accepted, and were seeking "academic challenges" and had strong personal commitment to contact the office to make arrangements.

Not all responded, but according to the principal's secretary Linda Giannotti, "most people did respond."

"You've got to be really committed; you've got to know what you're getting into, and that will be enough," said Schmidt. The GPA requirement was dropped, but students must have had prerequisite courses. Students wanting to take AP Biology, for example, need only to have taken Biology and Chemistry; there are no additional requirements.

Nobody knows how long if this policy will last. "At this point, we're told that it's a pilot," said Principal Keith Schmidt referring to the open enrollment policy. Added VanderMolen, "We'll see; we need to look at the data."

The action was taken in response to a push from the governing board, partly because of the rising number of students taking AP classes. The number grew from 119 in 1994 to 222 in 1998.

"They had just gotten some information about the number of kids who had applied ...and didn't get in," said VanderMolen. "They reacted positively... hoping that this would open the doors for many more students."

Another reason for the installment of the new policy is the University of California's new view on AP and Honors courses.

The University of California had thought of those as "elite courses," but now, they are becoming more critical in the college acceptance progress.

AP classes are "being used to a greater and greater degree... to decide who gets to go and who doesn't," said Schmidt.

Some UC professors, one of whom is an Acalanes parent, voiced requested open enrollment to the District Governing Board.

"A group of UC professors... did speak with the Governing Board about their concerns about our students being able to get into top-notch colleges without having enough AP classes on their transcripts," said VanderMolen.

The professors, along with a group of parents, spoke of the disadvantage of not having enough AP classes for college. Students who did not meet the eligibility criteria did not have the opportunity available prior to the policy shift.

As one of the major advocates for this change, board member Eleni Wanken proudly stated that "the AP classes are [now] open to all students."

Wanken feels that some students who may not have qualified under the screening process are "late bloomers," and their love of learning should be enough for to allow them to take an AP class.

"Who's to say that a C-student would not benefit from an AP class?" asked Wanken, a teacher and the mother of a Miramonte High School student.

Governing Board President Bill Jasper agreed. "It's beneficial for all students in the district."

Those who are not as enthusiastic about the new policy feared the addition of people who are not up to AP standards.

"I don't think it's fair.... We're probably going to have to go at a slower pace now (in order to accommodate) people who don't really qualify.... And that's not fair for the people who are really ready for a fast paced course," said an Acalanes student, who asked to remain anonymous. Acalanes counselor Pat Johnson spoke of other adverse effects the open enrollment policy could bring.

"There are enough pressures in adolescent lives... One of the pressures can be expectations from their parents, if indeed their parent's expectations are not realistic," said Johnson. "Sometimes... their parents expect them to do more than they're able."

On top of sports and other extra-curricular activities, "a workload that's unreasonable," said Johnson, could "create... unnecessary stress... (and a) negative impact on self-esteem" if students were forced into AP classes by their parents.

Other students don't mind the new policy; according to them, not much will change.

"Only the good students will... try to get into the (AP) classes," said senior Eddie Ng. "No, I don't think it will affect the scores at all.... Like I said, stupid people won't go into the classes."

According to VanderMolen, the only change would be in the number of AP classes. Class sizes are not changing, but "there are additional AP sections at each school."

Acalanes head counselor Bob Gangi agrees with Ng, speaking strongly against the notion that AP students would be held-back.

"I don't find that to be the case.... (AP kids) don't allow themselves to be dragged down," said Gangi.

"We have so many wonderful, bright students in our district," added VanderMolen.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

AHS Considers Strict Attendance Policy

By Heather Klurfeld
Entertainment Editor

A strict attendance policy piloted by Miramonte this past school year is under review by Acalanes and, if passed, could go into effect immediately after approval.

The new Miramonte attendance policy emphasizes that student attendance and class participation "are a valuable component of the learning process." As a result, students must attend a minimum of 75 of the 90 days per semester. Once a student has missed 15 days of a class, whether excused or not, the student will receive an F and will be dropped from the class. Thus, students can miss approximately one day per week per semester. For any senior, the effects of this policy could mean failure to graduate. The current policy, education code #5110, states that students may receive "an F after seven tardies in a semester and only after eleven unexcused absences." It fails to cite any punishment for excused absences.

Overall, Acalanes does not have an attendance problem. Approximately 97% of the student body attends school each day. However, because the California government has switched from a policy of negative attendance to a policy of positive attendance, the school is now relying heavily on student attendance for funding.

Under a policy of negative attendance, schools were funded per student for the entire year, and money was deducted every time the student was not in class. Currently, we use a policy of positive attendance, where the school only receives money if its students attend class. Thus, under positive attendance, money is given to the school only if the student is in class. In addition, the government will no longer accept excused absences other than medical appointments.

The forces driving this decision to implement a new attendance policy are two groups of chronically absent students. The first group is the 18 year-old second-semester seniors. At 18, students can call themselves out of school, provided that their parents have signed a note consenting to this

privilege. This "luxury," to the dismay of the faculty, cannot be revoked. It is guaranteed under California law and cannot be challenged.

In addition to the seniors, many students are not present in the last month of school due to AP classes. Once students have taken the AP test, the course is over. Thus, many students choose not to attend school rather than idly sit in class. Junior Daryl Dudum

activities they are involved in.

Many students will be forced to reduce participation in a variety of activities that allow them to miss class if the policy is adopted. Leadership activities, Youth Educator programs, Fifth-grade camp, and field trips would be counted as absences. Absences due to sports, however, will not be counted in the proposed policy. Sport schedules are determined by a district schedule, not an individual school calendar. Thus, the school has no control over their activities.

Senior Marisa Forte feels that the new policy "discourages students from participating in school activities." Principal Keith Schmidt believes, though, that most of the extra-curricular activities, while school-sponsored, are not requirements. Students have the option of participating, and, thus, are not forced nor discouraged to participate in activities.

Schmidt stresses that students need to participate in class. The Acalanes faculty presented no strong resistance against the concept except for some minor details. The consensus is that students belong in class.

Many students that miss class, though, are responsible and collect and make-up their missed assignments. These students perform well on tests and rarely fall far behind in class. Sophomore Angelina Skowronski said, "It shouldn't matter how many classes you miss as long as you are responsible and learn the material."

Hilma Jones, president of the Acalanes Parents Club, said, "Although learning is the top priority, there needs to be a balance between school and activities in order to get students more involved." Jones feels that exemptions should also be made for students involved in school-related activities other than sports. "What's fair for all students?" Jones asked. "If it's right for sports, why isn't it right for leadership?"

Jones, like many parents, feels that more involvement produces more spirit and a better academic environment for both students and teachers. The Parents Club has an excess of 7% in their budget that they would like to see spent towards school-re-



Blueprint Illustration/Noel Fahden

feels that the new attendance policy "is pointless (with respect to AP classes). You work hard all year, the class ends, and you still have to attend." Although students in AP classes do not miss every day of class after their AP test, for many it has been a luxury to miss a few.

The second group of students are those students involved in many different activities. Those students can have drastically different attendance records in different classes, not because they have been cutting class, but because of the abundance of ac-

EASY-99

Easy '99 Proves Troublesome For Staff

By Jason Ahn and
Kevin Medeiros
Staff Writers

Easy-99, the new computer system in the Counseling and Attendance offices, has created more work and problems than it has solved, according to faculty members, but officials in the District Office say the new program is necessary because it will save money and update the Acalanes system at the same time.

In February of this year, the Acalanes School District replaced its old system, SASI 3, with a newer system, Easy-99. "Eagle (Systems) came out with a far superior product that's easy to learn and does all the things (SASI 3) does well but uses modern tools," said District Business Manager Larry Larson.

Counseling Office Secretary Meredith Mooers would prefer to have SASI as the program in use because Easy has forced her to put in more time and work.

"As a comparison at this point, I saw a lot more advantages to SASI than I do Easy,"

said Mooers. Upon hearing this, Larson said, "In the big picture, flat out she's wrong."

There are two main problems with Easy which both make life harder for the Counseling and Attendance offices, staff say. The first is that it does not show the second and third elective choices of students. "I put down photography as my first choice and I got study hall instead...and my friend Emily got it and she put it down as her second choice," said sophomore Ayesha Sheikh. The flaw caused many students to be put in study hall instead of an elective.

The other problem is that the networking of the school took longer than expected, producing a time dilemma.

"I was to have 12 days in order to schedule students, and I had no computer for five of them because of technology rewiring," said Mooers.

However, Larson said that the counseling office procrastinated in the scheduling. "Truth is...we start scheduling students in April or May, and so we've had the entire summer to do that...so there's a huge

window in getting all of those things done."

Mooers contended that she only had from Aug. 2 to do the scheduling.

"My first day back fell on the second of August, and I had to have the schedules ready to go before the 19th...which allowed me 12 working days," said Mooers.

Despite these problems with Easy, the district did not have much of a choice in the matter in terms of cost and efficiency, according to Larson. The previous makers of SASI 3 told the district that they would no longer be giving technical support or upgrades and indicated that the schools should instead install a new system called SASI xP. SASI xP according to Larson "was a dog," and he thus chose to look outside the SASI systems for a "far superior" and enhanced system.

The system he found was Easy-99. Larson said that the cost of Easy "was hugely cheaper, and it does not require a whole lot of training." He also said that the millennium bug played an important role in the change because SASI 3 was not Y2K compatible.

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lated activities and clubs. Jones feels that it is important to "promote kids pursuing their interests" through the numerous clubs and activities at Acalanes.

Mary Thomas, student representative to the school board, feels that 15 absences per semester is lenient. Thomas said, "I don't understand why people have to miss that much school." Thomas feels, though, that many school-related activities shouldn't be included as absences. She said that the school board hasn't yet addressed this issue.

Currently, the policy is "under consideration," Schmidt said. There are numerous people, such as the School Board, the Parents Club, and the Acalanes faculty, who need to understand and respond to the proposed policy.

"We need to consider all of the ramifications before we move," Schmidt said. If the program is adopted, it will most likely go into effect next semester."

If the policy is passed, there are a num-

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ber of consequences. If the program remains identical to the one passed by Miramonte, the new attendance policy could, theoretically, immediately go into effect. If the policy is slightly different, though, it will be necessary to bring the proposed changes to the School Board, where the board will proceed to vote on the new policy.

Miramonte, where this policy was piloted this policy last year, felt that its students were missing too many classes, as much as 35 per semester, said Miramonte principal Dennis Regalado. "It was excessive," Regalado said, "(and) ...we felt that it was important to send the message that we value class time." The excessive amount of students missing class and large number of teacher complaints forced Miramonte to adopt a strict attendance policy to keep students in class.

Regalado said that approximately three students were dropped from a class as a result of this policy. Those students that were

dropped were punished for too many cuts, not too many absences. In addition, the students were dropped from electives or were lowerclassmen. No seniors were prevented from graduating.

Regalado feels that the administration should "put the responsibility back on the shoulders of the student to be present in class." At Miramonte, the students immediately became aware of their absences and tardies. "Kids were good about monitoring their absences," Regalado said.

Although the Miramonte administration was pleased, the student body was not.

"I think they have a point in trying to control the number of absences, but I think they should have some leniency with respect to what is and is not an absence," said Miramonte senior Jessica Noyes.

While the debate continues, Acalanes students should recognize that the policy has not been enacted nor proposed. There is nothing to be alarmed about...yet.

DRUG STATEMENT

Parents Take Problems Into Own Hands

By Katie Burroughs
Staff Writer

Although Lafayette does not have drug dealers combing the alleyways, Acalanes School District parents outlined their student safety concerns in the 1999 Parent Statement handed out at Dons' Days.

The message focuses on "educating ourselves to the reality of our children's social world." According to a report issued by the district in February, the "realities" include a 73% drinking rate among seniors and 75% incidence of annual drug use,

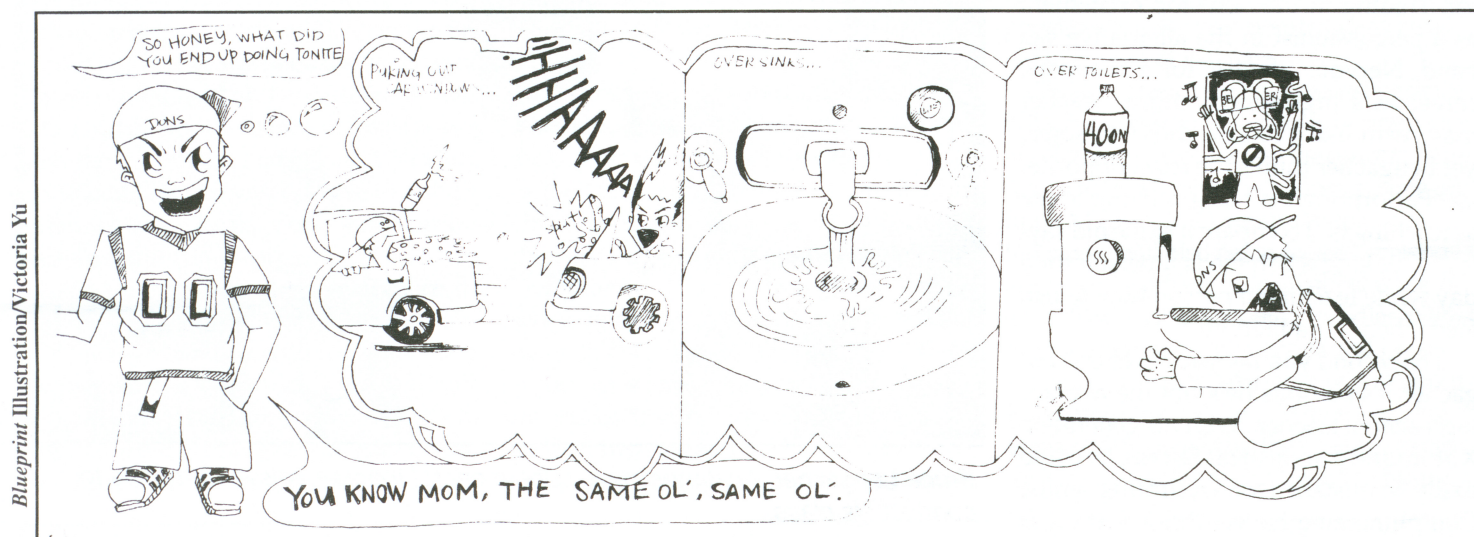
new statement and feels frustrated at the lack of teacher response.

If a teacher sees a student "doodling mushrooms in the borders of his paper, the teacher should speak to the issue seriously, not make light of it with a joke or ignore it all together. They shouldn't make light of it by saying, 'I know what you are into. . ha ha!' It is a serious issue," Peterson said.

Peterson said that in order to curb the problem, there needs to be support from "media, pediatricians, parents, rabbis, preachers, and schools." She believes "it

One student said it was a "denial mechanism" for parents, yet Peterson believes that the statement will be better received coming from other parents. The statement must still override what Johnstone calls "just part of high school."

Parent concerns are not new to the Acalanes District. Ten years ago, if parents signed the school pledge, their names were printed in the *Contra Costa Sun*. Last year, parents involved had a tiny telephone symbol printed next to their name in the directory, representing



Blueprint Illustration/Victoria Yu

although it did not specify which particular drugs composed the total.

The statement calls for open communication and support from parents, teachers, and coaches by responding "pro-actively" to behaviors that "put children at risk." It also encourages substance-free teen activities.

Out of 10 teachers surveyed, only two were aware of the statement. Both were unsure what the statement entailed. English teacher Liz Pagano said that she was only "vaguely aware" of the statement's existence, and she was unclear about what "pro-active" behavior entailed.

Lafayette's problems lie in its drug and alcohol use, according to Ellen Peterson, a teacher and parent who strongly supports the 1999 Parent Statement. Peterson attended one of the meetings concerning the

isn't a generation screwing up, but rather it is a tough culture."

Senior Megan Johnstone, however, does not believe that the statement has any impact. "It's inevitable that kids are going to party," she said.

One senior boy said he has gotten drunk to the point of throwing up several times. He described the "countless times puking out car windows, over sinks, and toilets." His mother's loyalty to the statement has not stopped him. He also added his mother was unaware of his drinking.

Many students interviewed did not know there was a Parent Statement. Senior Jessica Drevno said she was not aware of the statement nor does she believe it has any impact since "kids will do what they want."

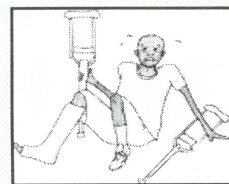
support of the pledge. In it, parents agreed to be present at student gatherings in their home and not tolerate any alcohol or drug use.

The 1999 pledge differs from past statements in that parents do not support it with their signature. Instead it is called a "Parent Statement," since it lists goals and criteria promoting a healthy community but does not ask for written support.

Some parents feel that the statement does not stop kids from drinking or doing drugs, but it does increase parental awareness of the problem. A parent of an Acalanes student said, "The statement outlines the concerns we all share about kids. It is not written to alter student opinion. It's written to broaden parent awareness. Without awareness, we cannot address the problem."

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NEW TEACHER

Dons Alive With The Sound Of Music

By Lauren Gong
Staff Writer

Behind his funky glasses and personal flair, Acalanes's new choral teacher Bruce Lengacher is a dedicated instructor. Trading in the non-stop excitement as a percussionist in the alternative ska band, Nervous Service, for a mundane career as a high-school chorus teacher may seem like a foolish choice to some, yet Lengacher thinks the exact opposite.

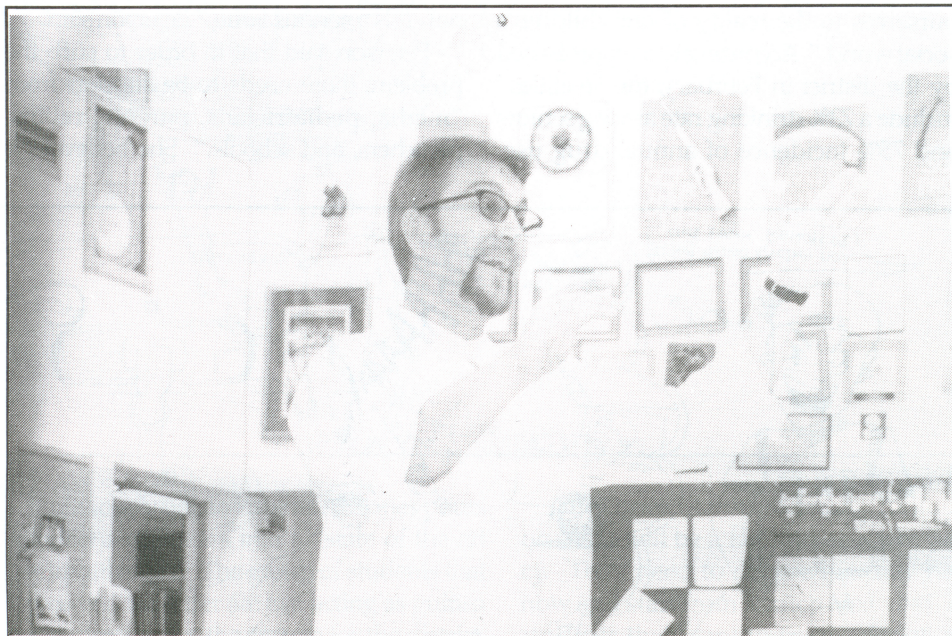
"Performing isn't as gratifying to me as teaching is. I compare it to the old saying: 'Cooking a fish feeds a person for a day while teaching a person how to fish feeds them for a lifetime.'"

The second you lay your eyes on Lengacher it's obvious he's not the average high-school teacher. With his generation X attire and a hoop in his left ear, he could easily be mistaken for a returning senior. Complimenting his youthful clothing is the attitude of a person half of his 37 years.

"I could live in shorts and tank-tops. I like to be comfortable. I'm on my feet probably 6 hours a day. I don't sit down a lot, and don't want anything restrictive."

Lengacher chose to attend a private Catholic high-school in his home state of Indiana where he participated in drama and a private choir early on. The Midwest simply didn't offer enough excitement for Lengacher who made an abrupt move to LA two weeks after he graduated.

It was in the City of Angels that he began to pursue performing arts with nightly appearances performing ska and punk music with Christian undertones. Night after night Lengacher and his fellow band mates would perform in dance clubs or anywhere they could find. After a couple years he grew restless with the



Blueprint Photo/J Joanna Dalhauser

Bruce Lengacher, Acalanes' new, upbeat choral teacher, raises his hands to conduct his class.

rootlessness of his job and went back to college at San Francisco State where he majored in Music.

Discussing his taste in music he says he's eclectic, enjoying jazz, classical, and alternative though denying any claims he listens to country.

"I grew up with country music, but it's not something I would want to listen to for long periods of time."

In his high school years, he relaxed with progressive rock and jazz in which Peter Gabriel, and groups like Kansas and Rush were very influential in his musical career.

Lengacher's present style similarly reflects his previous past interests liking such radio stations as KPFC, KCSM, or even Live 105 though he clarifies he has no admiration for Howard Stern.

Lengacher's students are surprised by his

laid back attitude and humor, but know there's a disciplinary line which they can't cross. Lengacher says, "As long as there's respect between my students and me, I don't see any reason why things should change. I'm of course not above getting angry, but it doesn't happen very often."

It's hard not to talk to Mr. Lengacher, or Bruce as his students know him, and think of him other than a peer. He shared a story of how his wife jokes with him, saying he pursued teaching so he could hang out with people his own age. He feels because of his young mind set, he can relate to the students with more ease.

One of his students said, "Bruce is a cool guy. I wish all my teachers would take to his style of teaching."

Lengacher is surely on the road to turning Acalanes into a school of singing fishermen.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Post-Graduate Exploits of a Student Activist

By Nick Allen
Staff Writer

For most teenagers, the word politics conjures images of old stiffs in starchy suits, gathered together to argue about the latest meaningless issues in god-knows-where. There is, however, a small minority of students who immerse themselves entirely in another sort of politics, politics where revolution is the means of change, and where an understanding of the world and their surroundings is of greater value than the type of car they drive. Charlie Eaton, a student at New York University, and a recent graduate of Acalanes, subscribes to the latter of the two.

Charlie was originally drawn to the world of left wing politics at Acalanes, and especially to the struggle of the Zapatistas in Chiapas. This group of indigenous Indians in Southern Mexico have been subjected to years of violence and terror at the hands of the PRL, or Mexican government. It was only in 1994 that the Zapatistas rose up, demanding respect of the Indian culture, a greater democracy for the people, and re-

formation the delegation brought back to the states is a potential threat to the government.

formation the delegation brought back to the states is a potential threat to the government. But where does one go from there? What is an eager student activist to do once he's studied up on the facts, and are filled to the brim with the theories of Marx, Lenin, Zinn, and Chomsky? Charlie knew exactly what. At Acalanes alone, Charlie revived the Amnesty International Club, successfully led a student demonstration against alleged Chevron human rights abuses in Nigeria, and created awareness of the School of Americas (SOA), a military training school responsible for such Latin American terrors as Manuel Noriega. To further his campaign against the School of the Americas, Charlie, along with other representatives from Amnesty Acalanes, spoke with California Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher concerning a recent bill intended to reduce funding for the SOA. Later that year, the bill was passed by the House of Representatives with the support of Tauscher.

Describing his transformation from high school student to student activist, Charlie commented, "When I became a political

formation the delegation brought back to the states is a potential threat to the government.

Charlie recalled the powerful tension of being surveilled by a foreign government in a war zone: "Immigration had parked across the street 24 hours a day, monitoring us. A municipal police truck swerved in front of us. Four armed officers and civilians with M16's surrounded and boarded our bus to see if we were Mexican students. We also had to agree not to speak of political beliefs in public, and carry all public literature face down." In addition, the delegation's phone line was tapped, and according to Charlie, "They issued our leader a five day Visa, which is utterly ridiculous because we could only stay five days." The delegation was also subject to military intimidation, such as forced bag checks. Many of the sites upon which the delegation walked were sites of recent massacres at the hand of the government military. Along with relentless monitoring and photographing of the delegation leader, Chiapas proved to be a very unwelcoming, if not intimidating experience.

Such is the life of a teenage lefty. Car chases, big guns, and travel abroad all comprise the life of a student radical; just ask Charlie. What makes this breed of people so interesting is not just their radical lifestyles and beliefs, but that at a time when their peers are out reveling in their adolescent splendor, they have made the decision to delve into the world of something much bigger and more significant than a classroom study.

"I was a teenage activist"

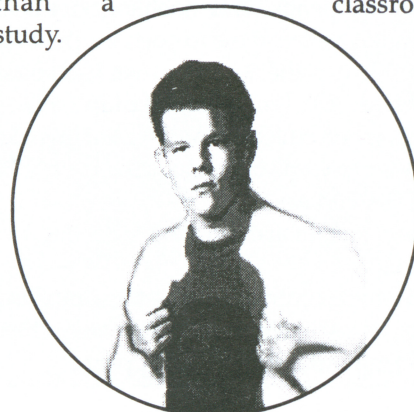
spect for their human rights. Present day, there still remains great tension between the Mexican Government and the rebels.

Eaton, explaining how he pursued his budding political interest says, "At Acalanes, Ramsay Thomas referenced the Zapatista movement and their struggle several times in my freshman world history class. I also picked up bits and pieces of knowledge about the Zapatista movement from listening to Rage Against the Machine and alternative media like KPFA 94.1, *Z Magazine*, and *The Nation*." Charlie, later added, "My home, school, and church, while I was young, all worked to instill in me a sense of doing what's just and right."

Reflecting upon the roots of Charlie's interest in left-wing politics, his mother, Beth Ferree, said, "Both (Charlie's father's) family and I have a fairly strong background in being involved in social issues and trying to promote change. I was also very active in

activist, I realized that acts of injustice in today's world are not rooted in a few bad individuals but in our entire American society and its political and economic institutions."

Outside of school, Charlie's activism brought him into the heart of conflict last summer, in both Chiapas as well as Guatemala, where he traveled with a group known as the SOA Watch. There he conducted interviews in the countryside as well as the city, attempting to uncover information which could be used back home to end the atrocities of the SOA. Unbeknownst to Charlie and other group members, Chiapas had reached (and remains in) a state of heightened tension due to farmer protests and heavy military presence. The delegation's sympathy to the Zapatistas plight, and their mission to recover information, made them targets for the military, being that any in-



COMMUNITY COMPASSION

Lafayette Didn't Stand to Lend a Hand

By Nathalie de Leon
News Editor

This summer I spent my time falling down, repeatedly, to test a hypothesis. Armed with two pairs of crutches and about a dozen friends, I took small groups into four different locations and had them pretend they had injured themselves.

The group, composed of both genders, several caucasians, Asians, and one black person, fell down in front of groups of people on the street to see who would help them. If offered help, the subjects would say "It's alright, I'm fine," but pretend that they were in pain getting up, and waited for the person to help them up.

We staged falls in Concord, Berkeley, Lafayette, and Sunvalley Mall. People in the region were generally willing to help, with the exception of Lafayette, where the results were unnerving and sadly surprising.

In the Countrywood Shopping Center in Concord, members of our group fell down a total of 20 times from June to August. The number of people passing by each fallen person varied from two to five, with 86 passerbys in all. In 17 out of the 20 times, at least one passerby stopped to help the person up.

In Berkeley near Telegraph Avenue, we enacted 20 falls before a total of 128 passerbys. In 18 out of the 20 falls, someone provided a helping hand. The two falls that went unassisted were done by the same person (suggesting perhaps bad acting), and in one of those falls, one man offered to help, but to my dismay, my friend said he didn't need help and got up on his own. Just to show how kind people in Berkeley were, one of my friends, while hobbling on crutches, rudely yelled at me to open the door for him. A lady at the next door over had heard and said, "Oh I'm so sorry. I didn't realize you were on crutches!" and started to make her way towards us, apologizing profusely.

The trend was obvious—people will try to help if you fall down and are in need of assistance.

By stark contrast, Lafayette seemed the nadir. It was the single void of the area where good samaritanship didn't appear.



Blueprint Illustration/Noel Falden

We stationed ourselves in various shopping centers on Mt. Diablo Blvd. After 20 falls and 117 passerbys, not a single person helped. In one extreme case, my 11 year-old sister genuinely hurt herself by accident when she fell, and had blood trickling down the side of her leg. She lay sprawled on the ground for over a minute while 12 people, including adults and teenagers surrounded her, staring and asking if she was alright. She said she was fine, but grimaced as she tried to get up on her own and took another short fall down. She groaned and held her leg while she was on the ground, and tried to get up, wincing in pain.

Not a single person actually offered to help, even as she struggled to her feet

leaning on one foot. The other cases were similar. People treated the situation as the scene of a car accident; they stood around in a crowd, asking if the injured person needed help, but made no effort to give it. In one case, a man picked up a single crutch, the only help offered in Lafayette.

Even more disturbingly, my black friend dressed in what he called "ghetto clothes" and staged falls in Lafayette. He wore baggy jeans, a white t-shirt and a blue bandana. In this case, people stepped out off of the sidewalk into the street to get around him. Whereas in other cases, they stopped on the sidewalk until the person got up.

The friend, a resident of Concord, said that he expected the results, but was hop-

COMMUNITY COMPASSION

ing he would be proven wrong.

To ensure that Berkeley and Concord were not completely out of the ordinary, we did a quick test run at Sunvalley Mall, where people come from all over the East Bay Area, some from as far as Marin County. After ten falls and 32 people, we concluded that the first two sites were typical of the area. Out of ten falls, eight cases had at least one good samaritan.

Lafayette was obviously out of the ordinary. Lafayette councilperson Anne Grodin asserted that "there could be some other factors."

"My experience shows that we are more generous than that," said Grodin. "Something else must have been going on. That's not the community I've known."

Reverend Peter Whitelock of the Lafayette/Orinda Presbyterian Church said that the study may be indicative of a greater problem.

"It's sadly... more common in human nature in general that we just get caught up in our own agendas," said Whitelock. "Sometimes we just don't see people in need."

Acalanes fared similarly to Lafayette. Out of five falls, the subject was helped once, and the people that helped him were friends that happened to be passing by. In the quad, five girls turned around and stared at the subject after he had fallen. Although they were at arm's length, they did not offer to help. In the 500's hall, people moved aside to let him pass, indicating that they noticed he was there, but no one helped when he fell. In the 400's hall, people even turned around and laughed while he tried to get up on one crutch. While eating lunch, several students in the 100's hall turned around at the clattering of crutches, but neglected to do anything. One consolation: a teacher, noticing the fallen victim, stopped and extended a hand to help

him up.

The subject was disheartened by the turn of events. He said that he felt "rejected" by the student body when he was not helped up.

Parent Club President Hilma Jones

"Sometimes we need to have these studies. (The findings) will hopefully inspire us to do better."

-Reverend Whitelock

expressed worry about the results.

"How awful," said Jones. "I am concerned about Lafayette. We are such an insulated community. (The

community doesn't) see a lot of... hardships in the world and how important it is to lend a hand."

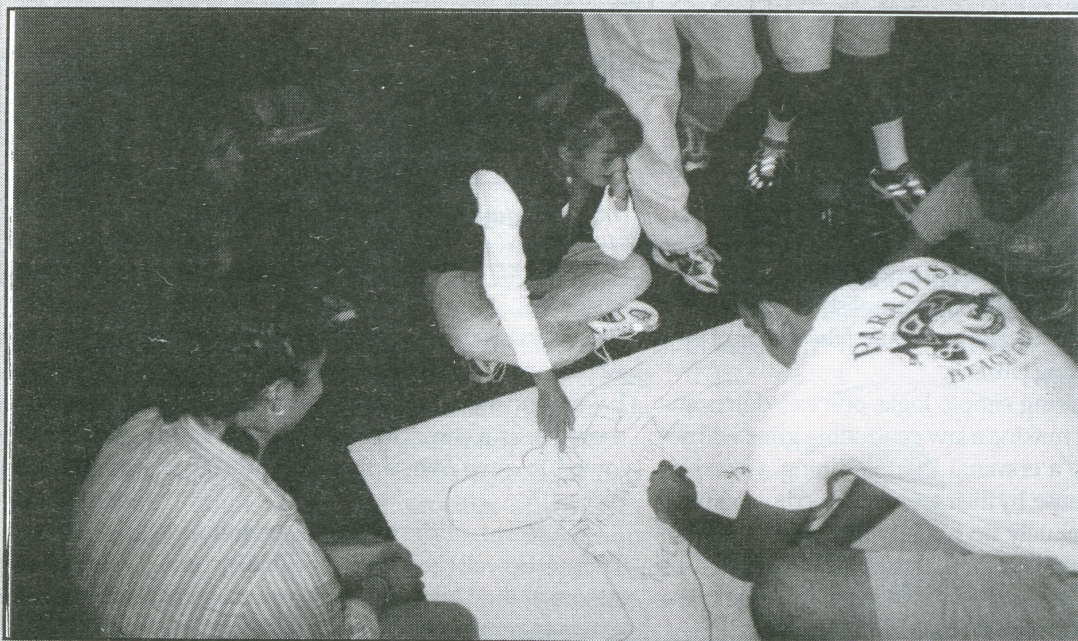
Senior Kelly Connolly agreed, saying that the results could be attributed to the setting of the community.

"Lafayette is not the best atmosphere in which to raise people so that they understand what the world is like," said Connolly. "I think it's very sheltered."

Principal Keith Schmidt drew no conclusions from the study, saying only that "I would hope that we wouldn't have that feeling of selfishness."

Rev. Whitelock said, "Sometimes we need to have these studies. (The findings) will hopefully inspire us to do better."

There is no definitive reason as to why Lafayettans were so reluctant to donate five seconds of their day to help a fallen young person. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that out 234 hands in Lafayette, not one was extended to help.

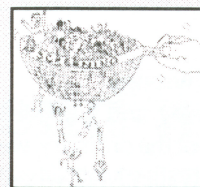
LEADERSHIP

Blueprint Photo/Heather Klurfeld

Leadership students brainstorm qualities of a good leader at the Berkeley Leadership Conference on Wednesday, Sep. 22. The leadership class attended this annual conference to plan this year's Homecoming theme and activities.

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CITIZEN SAM

Gun Control Runs Out of Ammo

By Sam Cunningham
Opinion Editor

A tidal wave of gun control fervor swept the nation this summer. With several violent incidents making headlines over the past few months, the call for gun control has grown very strong.

Californians are now limited to purchasing only one handgun a month. Assault weapons have been banned, this time comprehensively.

True to their word, gun-control proponents are correct when they say that their programs and legislation will help prevent accidents involving children and crimes of passion. But with regard to the stopping of criminal gun violence in America, gun-control's effects are extremely limited if not entirely absent.

Laws intended to keep guns out the hands of criminals are, bluntly put, useless. The only thing legislation like the one-handgun-a-month bill will accomplish will be to take guns out of the hands of law-abiding citizens.

Using simple logic, one can determine that making a law controlling guns will not stop a criminal from attaining a weapon because, by their very nature, criminals have absolutely no respect for the law. Highly-trumpeted gun control legislation will be nothing more than an inconvenience to the next criminal wanting to buy a weapon.

Gun control is disarming the wrong people. It is restricting those who wish to legally purchase a weapon for defense or sport. An individual who is very unlikely to use

his gun for illegal purposes is equally as unlikely to break the restrictions put on him by our morally superior politicians in Sacramento and Washington.

Those who gun purchasing laws are supposed to be keeping a leash on are wreaking havoc on society. Consider for a moment all five of the firearms used by Ruford B.

the same day they are released from prison. Half admitted they planned to do so.

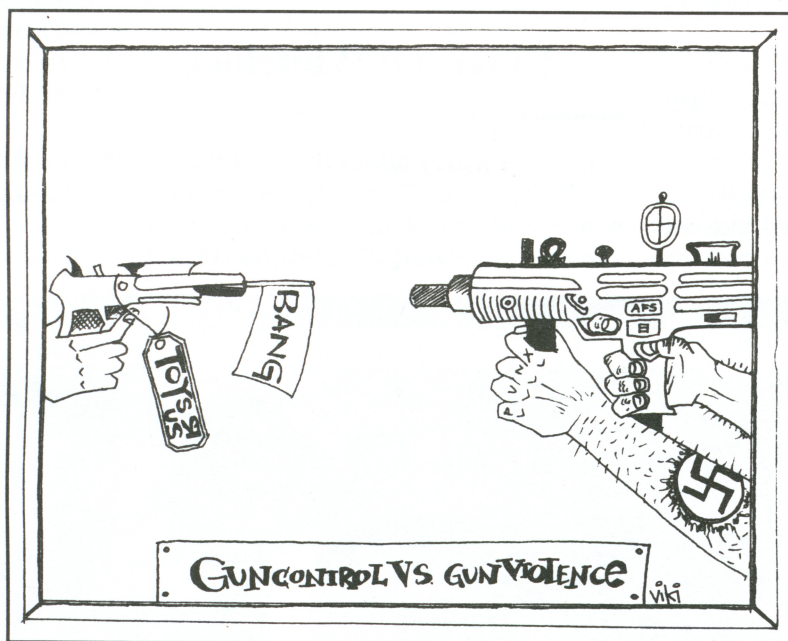
Those who respond to this situation with a proposal to ban all firearms are even more out of touch with reality than their more moderate gun control cousins. Thinking that making guns illegal will solve our violence problem is like thinking that banning crack solved the drug problem.

Other than mobilizing the Gestapo or installing telescreens, there is absolutely no way our government can round up more than 200 million firearms and then effectively stop the smuggling and illegal manufacture of weapons. It would be like a bloody, violent version of Prohibition.

Gun control has it's uses. The mandatory installation of trigger locks could prove to be helpful in reducing accidents with children, and other measures may have positive effects. But overall gun control is impotent in the extreme. It is better suited to enhance the status of

the politician signing it into law than actually cut down on crime.

Despite its overuse by the NRA, the slogan "guns don't kill people, people kill people" is essentially true. Why, after centuries or relatively responsible use of guns are we now awash in schoolyard massacres and random killings? The causes of this epidemic have deep-reaching roots in the decaying social fabric of our society, a trend which receives very little attention in the press. Gun control makes the front page the same way the Nazis convinced Germany to follow them: complex problem, simple solution.



Blueprint Photo/Victoria Yu

Furrow in his shooting at a Los Angeles Jewish community center were already outlawed under California state law. Furthermore he, as a convicted felon, was not allowed to even own a firearm in the first place.

In a recent article, syndicated columnist Thomas Sowell cited a survey done by professors at the University of Massachusetts surveying criminals behind bars in 10 states. Four-fifths of the interviewees agreed that getting a gun is not a serious problem for them. The majority of those convicted of gun-related crimes said they can get a gun

HANNAH AND FLAK TALK BACK**Time to Stop Selling Deadly Weapons to Children**

By Hannah Hens-Piazza
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Every year there is a new popular toy on the market. From remote control cars to video games to talking dolls, there is always one "cool toy" that every young boy and girl keeps an eye out for. But one toy seems to have everlasting appeal, especially to the male denomination—the toy gun. Not just water guns, but Star Wars guns, laser guns, dart guns, and BB guns. And really, what better way to steer today's children away from violence than to pack the toy stores with pretend deadly weapons?

Almost every time a student or students turn against their peers and lash out in an act of mass killing at school, the weapon of choice is a gun. Guns are easy enough to get a hold of despite all the gun purchasing laws the government enacts, and they are capable of killing several people in a short amount of time. Perhaps one of the scariest weapons, the gun involves no personal interchange. It can be fired from a distance, so the shooter does not have to personally face the victim or mass of victims. And yet, there are parents that let their children purchase toy guns. *What's the harm?* they might ask. After all, *Playing with guns will not turn my child into a terrorist.* Au contraire.

The message being sent to the children, often at a very young age, is completely the opposite of what teenagers are taught to think, namely that violence doesn't solve problems—it creates them. Children pretend to shoot each other as a game without considering the actual consequences. These children will all be in high school one day and have to face the pressures accompanying adolescence. Some of these children will have many friends and little social concern. Others will be the "outcasts" whom no one approaches. Some will even feel as alienated from their peers as the Littleton gunmen did, and some will act on this alienation based on what they were allowed to do as children.

The responsibility of ending fantasy violence is not the children's though. It is up to the parents whether they tolerate gun fights in the backyard or whether they sit their child down at a young age and explain to them the real life effects of student violence. The parents can provide an environment where guns are a norm and play battles are okay, or the parents can provide a place where guns are not just feared, but actually understood, and children are taught to value their own life and the lives of others.

Some parents may not feel comfortable

talking about the issues of death, anger, and conflict resolution with young children, but it is far better to tell a child the truth than to let them find out for themselves.

The most important idea that needs to be promoted in the fight against violence is acceptance, or at the very least a non-violent tolerance. Not just tolerance of one's friends and family and neighbors, but of everyone—and maybe that means accepting the students who don't have friends or who seem upset all the time. It is so much easier to ignore them than it is to reach out. But as long as we are selling weapons to children, we should deal with the social pressures that are now more frequently leading to the use of real weapons.

The first step in the fight against violence is the elimination of the deadly weapon section from toy stores across the country. Selling "pretend" guns to children is such an irony. Maybe within the next couple of years, toy stores will also begin to sell "pretend" booze or "pretend" illegal substances or even "pretend" used heroin needles. Children are extremely perceptive and impressionable, and they take note of just about everything around them. If they learn how to play with something, they can just as easily learn to use the real thing in the future.

Seniors Losing Their Drive

By Andria Flakoll
Co-Editor-in-Chief

The senior class of 2000 is not only special because it's not the freshmen, sophomore, or junior class, but also because it's the class of the future. If the Earth doesn't explode in another one of those Big Bangs, the class of 2000 will be the first to leave high school in the millennium and the first to enter college in that same millennium.

The people who make the decisions of today will no longer be around someday, and then we seniors will be asked to solve the world's problems. This was all very peachy until we came to school on the first day as big bad seniors and had to park in the boonies and actually commute from our cars. Well, as far as I'm concerned, the world can just take its dilemmas, and give

them to the juniors to solve: at least their walk to school leaves them enough energy.

Senior only parking is not an unheard of concept. Miramonte knows how to treat their seniors well. It has a separate lot that only seniors are allowed to park in. How they thought of this tricky concept, I'd like to know, but the important thing is that their seniors are properly pampered.

There's an ironic twist to the puzzling concept of senior only parking. Miramonte's not the only school to come up with it. How Las Lomas heard about it, I'd also like to know. Their entire main lot is completely free to seniors, and it's the same size as Acalanes' current front lot. The Administration over there is concerned about the world's future and knows that Las Lomas' seniors can make the world a better place.

They have prioritized. Yes, the juniors and sophomores may be left in the dust, but the seniors are comfortable.

Did anyone, possibly even those who deal with parking, stop to think that good things could come out of this year's parking crunch, besides air-conditioned portables? Did anyone even ponder the idea of senior only parking? Anyone? Would it be that horrible to just admit that seniors are better than juniors, and give the seniors some privileges...like, I don't know, parking maybe? But it's just a thought.

After three years, I think we've paid our dues. So when it comes time to cure even one of the world's many problems, remember your senior year when injustice was running, or rather, driving rampant in the Acalanes parking lot.

AP EDITORIAL

AP Should Stand For "All People"

By James Sherwood
Feature Editor

Over the summer the Acalanes School District decided to change its policies on honors and AP courses, allowing more kids the opportunity to take them, and although this seems like a good decision, parts of the new system have some serious problems.

On June 27, a letter was sent out to a selected group of students announcing the new policy. This group included those who took the application test for an honors and/or AP class last year and failed. Evidently at the end of last year, the District decided to try out a new system, and those students that did not pass the exam last year were given a chance to take the course. The policy is unclear, but the bottom line is more kids are being admitted into the courses even if they did not pass the entrance exam. At the end of this school year, the District says it will decide if these new rules are successful, particularly with AP scores, and if the new policy should be implemented in years to come.

If the District really wanted to make the new system effective, it would have sent out a newsletter to all the students at Acalanes. This probably would have created a rush of eager kids, but it would have been fair. An excerpt of the letter states, "In the spirit of offering all students the least restrictive learning environment possible," and then goes on to say all of last year's applicants are now able to enroll. These students didn't even pass the exam so the only thing that sets them apart from everyone else is the fact that they tried out. If it actually wanted to make access available to all students, it could have done so. Even if the decision was made after summer began, it is not that difficult to send out a letter to the student body. Twice as much material is sent out at the end of summer for Don's days. Money

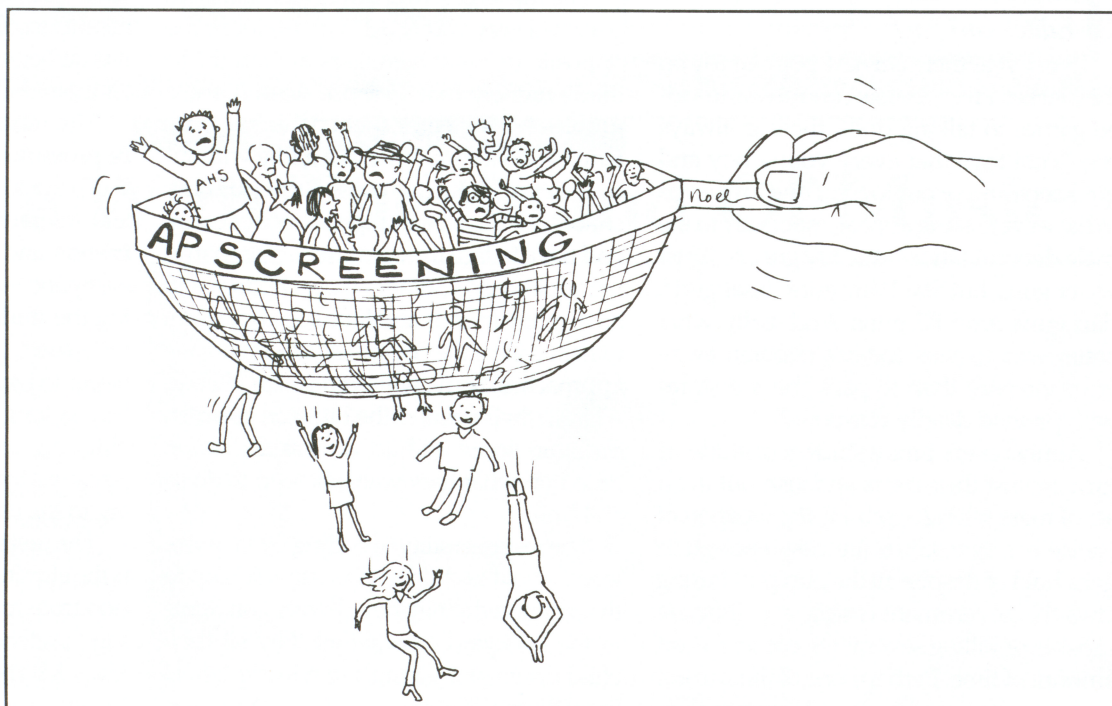
is obviously not an issue as Acalanes pours millions of dollars into a "state of the art amphitheater." The group of students that received the letter are just acting as guinea pigs, testing out the system for the district. It seems by instituting this new policy the district was able to please some grouchy parents' personal agendas with complete disregard to the rest of the students who deserve a chance.

The rules for qualification into an AP or Honors course are misleading. Last year, students with a 3.5 academic GPA were the only ones eligible to take the entrance exam in advanced English classes. Although grades do show a student's level of intelligence and work ethic, they should not be a deciding factor. There are many students that excel in one particular subject of school, and although they may not be consistent in every course, it should not prevent them from pursuing the one they enjoy and succeed in. By enforcing a GPA cutoff the classes will be filled with, good overall students who want to fill up their college resumes, but they will be losing out on many talented students who would benefit immensely from what the class has to offer.

The District seems to be very confused on what will be a fair and affective policy. They need to drop what they have now and start from scratch next year. All students that want to try out for an advanced placement course should have the opportunity to. If the District really wants to support all students, it should be willing to allow a student to prove himself on his own terms: in the classroom.

The bottom line is willing students should be eligible to expose themselves to an advanced learning environment regardless of their past experiences in school. After all, students are taught that America is the land of opportunity. If they can prove themselves in the classroom, screening tests are irrelevant.

Based on their performance in the course during the first quarter the teacher should have the option of transferring the student out of the class. If they can't handle the fast-paced curriculum, the teachers should not be forced to carry them, but everyone should have the chance. This may create more classes and a need for more teachers, but what's more important, a fancy amphitheater or student's future?



Blueprint Illustration/Noel Falden

PRO/CON

Wireless Phones Tie Down Drivers

Ohio Bans Cell Phones In Cars; Will California Be Next?

By **Damon Diederich**

Staff Writer

The California State Legislature is considering a ban on drivers using cellular phones. This is a wise and timely move because cell phones have caused many accidents on the road. Ohio has already passed similar legislation in parts of the state.

According to records from Safestway Driving School, drivers talking on cell phones while driving have a 3 times greater chance of crashing than drivers not babbling at speed.

There is no reason why the ban should not go forward. No person has a pressing need to talk on the phone while driving. Drivers can always pull over to the side of the road if they need to have a cell phone conversation. In an emergency there is no need to drive while talking on the phone.

Consider also the fact that from the time we are small children we are programmed not to drop pieces of electronic equipment. What if you are holding your cell phone with one hand and driving with the other? You might need both hands to swerve out of the way. If you hesitate to drop the cell phone for just a second because your mind says "Don't break! Expensive!" that instant could be fatal.

It is a well-known fact among psychologists that most people can only actively process two things at a time. Driving and talking on the phone requires more than two functions. By this standard, talking on the cell phone while driving seriously compromises safety.

Most people want to have cell phones in their cars for security reasons. A ban on talking on the cell phone while driving would not preclude these safety measures. Drivers can always call 911 from the shoulder of the road. If a driver needs to talk on the phone while hurtling at Mach 9, he's probably too busy anyway. Get a life and maybe save your own.

Having to use cell phones while driving also stresses the driver. How are you supposed to concentrate while Aunt Nelly grates on about why Brunhilda should be a bridesmaid.

Another problem with cell phones on the highway is road rage. Suppose a driver is talking on his cell phone and finds out that the coach will only let little Johnny be the second string mascot. He rants and hangs up. Now that he is really ticked off, he has to do something with his anger, so he cuts the green Gremlin off, then the Gremlin cuts someone else off. This vicious cycle begins in part due to cell phones.

According to California Highway Patrol records, accidents in the "inattention" category comprise the second largest group of accidents each year, after driver error. A Dublin CHP officer said that cell phones are frequently the cause of accidents. "It happens all the time," she said. Officers of the CHP see cell phone related accidents often. If it is obvious to CHP officers, it should be equally obvious to us. Cell phones have no place in the car. Just hang up and drive!

By **Keenan Ng**

Staff Writer

The Ohio state legislature has recently passed legislation banning the use of cell phones while driving an automobile, and California may soon be on its way to passing legislation similar to Ohio. They argue that banning cellular phone use will decrease the number of fatalities and injuries in car accidents.

While it is true that cell phone use has contributed to some injuries, cell phone use is a minor reason drivers get into accidents. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, "inattentive driving" only makes up 5.9% of all accidents. It is speeding (20.8%) and the failure to keep in proper lane (28.3%) that cause the most fatalities. Further, the 5.9% that inattentive driving contributes in no way represents the actual number of accidents cell phones may create. Other inattentiveness such as eating, paying attention to children or other passengers, wandering thoughts and having too much on one's mind most likely compose the majority of the 5.9%. Factor in speeding, failure to obey traffic laws, irresponsible pedestrians, drunk driving, other drivers, etc., and the number of accidents caused by cell phones lowers even more. In short, even statistically, the argument that cell phones are a problem large enough to require state legislation is a farce. The numbers show that cell phones are no more of a problem than drinking a carton of milk while driving.

The cell phone is a major tool in the conduct of business. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, if California were an independent nation its economy would be seventh in the world. Its gross domestic product is almost one trillion dollars. Simply put, without the cell phone, fewer business interactions would take place. Doctors, stock brokers, lawyers, contractors, and just about every other profession would be less efficient in their operation.

Lastly, the legislation would be another restriction on the American people. Indirectly, it would be an infringement of free speech, a fundamental principle of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because while on a cell phone it would not allow people to express opinions, ideas, and other assorted freedoms associated with speech. There is simply no need for the government to tell Americans when and where they can talk. Still, the reasoning is simpler than that. Granting government does need some control over its citizens and needs some power to make rules in order to govern, there comes a point when the government makes too many rules and controls its people too much, almost to the point of a dictatorship. While that point is not here now, it is more than possible that it could be a reality in the future.

A CALANES BLUEPRINT ENTERTAINMENT

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SENIORS' MANIFESTO

Seniors Are In For A Hell Of A Year...

By Brian Connolly
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Welcome back, seniors!!! It has been a long, tedious summer jam-packed with boundless hours of free time and myriads of social obligations—but we're finally back. So turn that frown upside down because the long-awaited school year is in session. Set your alarm to get you up for those enjoyable morning hours which only Cletus the slack-jawed yokel was intended to be up during to milk the cows. Roll out of bed, throw on your spaghetti and soda-stain-laden clothes, program your VCR to tape Springer nice and early, put your sense of well-being into hibernation, grab your backpack, and get to school just in time to review homework you didn't know was assigned. Oh joyous day! No more summer.

No more seven day weekends, no more trips to Hawaii, no more cruises, no more squandering precious time with friends, no more attempting to break a glass bottle over your head, no more spinning in a circle chanting the lyrics to N'Sync's latest hit until you vomit and pass out in it and, finally, no more waking up in a pile of dirty laundry, food wrappers and aluminum cans at a random house, so disoriented and late that you have to be roused by a friend to wake up in time to go to sleep...wait, that was probably more of a description of my summer than yours. But regardless of what you did (or didn't do) this summer, it's over...get used to it.

Now we're back, and to welcome us back from summer are the pleasant susurrations emanating from the construction site intermixed with an uplifting choir of profanities from the construction workers. Oddly enough, this medley of vocals and percussions is the perfect ensemble that actually boosts students concentration during those

difficult, future-determining examinations. Nothing says classy quite like a motley crew of sweat-soaked pungent smelling construction workers! Who knows, maybe they'll even patch up the cracks poking out of their pants!

Acalanes was once a very becoming institute of learning, but now, after its drastic makeover, it is quality enough to blend in to the ornate and cultured ghetto district of the projects of South Central. Perhaps the



recent additions to our school will help to escalate the enrollment rate of the diligent students of the intercity districts.

Because the construction project cuts down the number of classrooms we have access to, we are blessed enough to make use of the elegant trailer-park school-site located in our perpetually overcrowded student parking lot. The portables cut down on a large portion of previously unattainable front-lot-parking spaces. Students, usually the seniors with first period off campus, have to park at the gravel pit known as Springbrook. Fortunately for students, the dents and chips you get in your car's paint job from uplifted rocks at Springbrook make the expensive, lus-

trous coat on your car porous and help your car breathe. If you arrive even later, then you have to park at the church which is only a brisk five minute walk away from campus. What is really fun, though, is making a trip to the impound lot when the church is all out of vacant parking spaces. I sure am glad that the administration overlooked senior-only parking in the front lot because it is necessary to oversell parking permits so that only half the people who pay to park in the lot have the opportunity to park there.

With all these great changes being made, one might ask what more exciting and new ways the administration can alter the curriculum my senior year to make *my* life more enjoyable? Well, that question has been given a response. You asked for it, now you got it! How does a strict new policy on student attendance this year sound? Now, no matter how sick you feel, your mom can't force you to stay home more than a few days a semester. Hooray! We are not allowed more than fifteen absences. For three years I have waited patiently for the opportunity to call myself out of school when I turn eighteen. Now that I am a senior, they deny seniors their God-given right to call it quits during the second semester and come in one day, every-other week and so uninformed that your mere presence in the classroom makes everyone else dumber.

Senior priority has been forsaken to accommodate the increasing sizes of incoming classes. According to the administration, all these changes have been "preordained" and must be adhered to. So strap on your seatbelts and get ready. Thanks Acalanes, it is going to be one *hell* of a year.

MOVIE REVIEWS

Audience Fails To Hear The Stir Of Echoes

By Elisabeth Geier

Staff Writer

Love Stinks



(French Stewart, Bridgette Wilson) **Rated R**

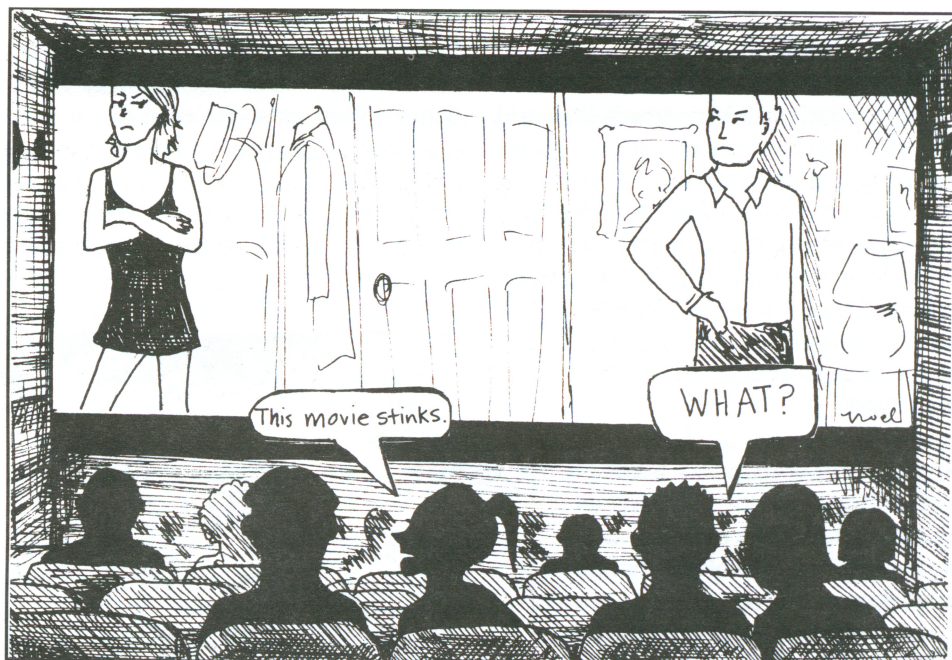
Here is a word to all you potential film writers out there: don't title your film anything that can be used against it in a review. One would think that Jeff Franklin, an experienced television writer who is famous for the sitcom *Full House*, would know better. Then again, this is the man who launched the careers of Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. By titling his first feature film *Love Stinks*, Franklin is practically begging for a beating.

Third Rock from the Sun's French Stewart is Seth Winnick, a successful sitcom writer who falls for Chelsea (Bridgette Wilson, better known to the masses as "that chick from *Billy Madison*"), a beautiful blonde interior decorator. He's quirky; she's hot. It's a match made in Hollywood Heaven. They meet, they mate, they co-habitate, but then Chelsea's true colors begin to show.

Chelsea is obsessed with the idea of marriage, but Seth has a fear of commitment. When Seth refuses to propose, Chelsea sues him for alimony. From there, the film turns into a nauseating play-by-play of Seth and Chelsea's attempts at revenge towards each other.

Wilson, who turned in a lovely, if one-dimensional, role in *Billy Madison*, is portrayed as a woman desperate to tie her man down. In one of the film's more insightful moments, Chelsea screams at Seth, "You are SO unfunny!" Then there is Stewart, who is charming and loveable on television, but just can't cut it as a leading man on the big screen. Together, they manage to annoy the audience past the point of caring what happens to the characters.

There's really only one fitting review for *Love Stinks*, and an obvious one at that. In the words of *The Critic*'s Jay Sherman, "It STINKS!" Grade: D-



Blueprint Illustration/Noel Fadden

Stir of Echoes



(Kevin Bacon, Illeana Douglas) **Rated R**

In his new film, *Stir of Echoes*, sexy Kevin Bacon is all muscles and scruffy facial hair. Bacon plays Tom Witzky, a working-class Chicago man with a wife and young son. At a neighborhood party, Tom, a skeptic of the supernatural, allows himself to be hypnotized by his mischievous sister-in-law (Illeana Douglas). Tom asks, "What's the worst that can happen?" He soon finds out.

Tom begins to have visions of another realm, including flashbacks of a bloody tooth, red flashing lights, and a grasping hand. Tom soon learns that his son Jake (Zachary David Cope) begins to see these apparitions as well. The film opens with Jake speaking directly to the camera, asking "Does it hurt to be dead?" It is an extremely effective moment.

Unfortunately, the rest of the film fails to be as riveting. The more frantic and paranoid Tom becomes, the more melodramatic the film seems. Bacon is stuck with scenes that no actor could salvage, much less the star of *Footloose*. The other main performers in *Stir of Echoes* are ca-

pable, but even Illeana Douglas, usually a powerful presence in her films, drags under a shabby script.

Once Tom begins to interact with his visions, seeing and feeling the haunting scenes that have been plaguing him, it doesn't take long for the audience to piece together the plot points. Unfortunately, it takes another forty-five minutes for Tom to figure it out for himself, and, in the meantime, the film relies on cliché after cliché to pass the time. This one has it all: cute kid, hot couple, things that go bump in the night. What it lacks, though, is any real sense of suspense.

A film like this cannot escape comparison to another summer movie, *The Sixth Sense*. While the films have similar themes, *The Sixth Sense* is a much better movie. The writing and acting are superb, the plot twists unpredictable, and the overall effect is more chilling. *Stir of Echoes* is not as well-written and includes unnecessary graphic scenes to keep the viewer's attention. The *Sixth Sense*, with its relatively tame PG-13 rating, is ten times as scary as the R-rated *Stir of Echoes*. In the end, *Stir of Echoes* fails to create a stir of intrigue, leaving the audience echoing for more substance. Grade: C

A DON'S LIFE

Welcome To Acalanes: "A Don's Life"

By Kerry Ann Reid

Staff Writer

Hey, what's up? My name is Don, and I'm not one for introductions, so let's leave it at that. Basically I'm a junior here at Acalanes. I've lived in Lafayette since day one of my life. I started meeting friends at the bus stop in elementary school, which turned into Taco Bell once I reached Stanley and, now that I'm at Acalanes, has evolved into Shell.

At Stanley, I thought I was a hotshot. This continued through sophomore year of high school. But now that I'm a junior, and an upper-classman, I KNOW that I'm a hotshot.

My life at home is sheltered. Early on, I assumed that we all live in a 2.7 child household, have a stay-home mother that bakes cookies, and have a picket fence out front. Yeah right. Most of our parents aren't even on speaking terms with each other, we have two or three other siblings, and bring store-bought cookies in our lunches.

I enjoy playing soccer, but after being rejected from the team three years in a row, I've resorted to football. My thoughts are that, regardless of how many hours we practice, we will never win until we have the support of the student body (and coming to the game to socialize or drink does not count.) The only people who support us are the cheerleaders, and they are no more respected than we are.

Speaking of respect, freshmen need to realize that it is not their place to milk. Since when do the juniors get milked by a lower class? Isn't that offsetting the whole hierarchy of Acalanes?

Yeah, so I went to the "Hola Fiesta" dance last weekend and, like most other dances, I had an OK time. I saw the seniors who were falling over themselves and mumbling things that made no sense. And as always, the freshmen dressed up and looked like

fools. What part of "informal" did they not catch? And have you seen how they slow dance? They are so far apart that it looks like kindergardeners playing London Bridge. Then again, what would a dance at Acalanes be without the freshmen? An empty gym. Or in this case, an empty space between the gyms.



Blueprint Illustration/Noel Fadden

Thank God we had a D.J. who had the common sense to play only three slow songs. Who wants to cling to someone when you're sweaty? Actually, though, people get closer during the fast songs than the slow songs. There's always the bonus of the three person fast dance, where you have two guys with a girl in the middle. It reminds me of a ping-pong ball bouncing back and forth. Fun.

The only relief came from having the dance outside, which even I have to admit was a great idea. That is, until I got hit in the head with an egg. Not only was it gross, but it hurt. As if the sickening smell of rotten egg wasn't enough, I had to endure the sight of a couple playing tonsil hockey on

the dance floor. I have three words for those two: "Find a bedroom!"

Enough of that. It's been four weeks since school started, and my schedule is finally ready. I requested weight lifting, and they gave me dance. I asked for auto shop, and they gave me chorus, even though I'm tone deaf and not that secure.

Not only was my schedule messed up, I had to wait for hours and hours to get it fixed. However, I'm not the only one who had to stand in line during lunch or before school for an eternity. It seemed like half of the school had two third periods or sixth period off campus but seventh period math. I thought we were supposed to have a new, more efficient scheduling system. I guess I was wrong.

As this year gets off to a bustling start, I realize the immense amount of homework that I have to deal with. But I have to admit, it's going to be a fun year. SAT's, college touring, AP US History, and a root canal. Really, it's going to be a fun year. I'm really excited about Homecoming and polishing up my act for the talent show. I think that for the third year in a row I will be one of the 30 people at Bingo Night. Seriously, this is going to be a fun year. I know it. All I have to do is get out of that ridiculous chorus class before too many people find out that I'm in it...

LEADERSHIP CALENDAR

- 10/1 Club Day (During Lunch)
- 10/1 Home football game vs. Miramonte
- 10/11-10/16 Homecoming Week
- 10/11 Homecoming Rally
- 10/12 Powderpuff
- 10/13 Lip Sync Competition/Class T-shirt Day
- 10/14 Homecoming Assembly/Class Skits/Theme Dress-up Day
- 10/15 Homecoming Game
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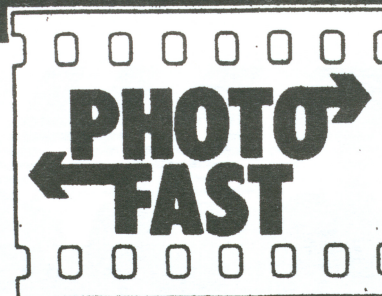
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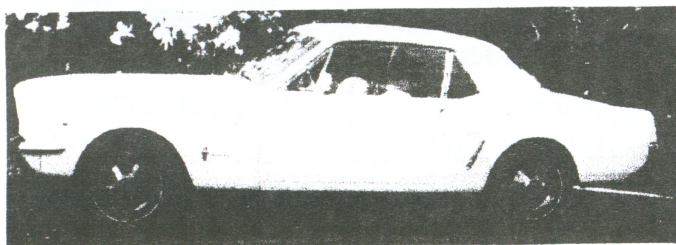
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ACALANES BLUEPRINT SPORTS

INSIDE



Girls' Tennis
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FOOTBALL

Strong Start For Acalanes Football

By Alex Gallo
Staff Writer

The Acalanes Dons Football team beat Mt. Diablo High 27-6, Friday at Acalanes, to show everyone that they can win without key players. Using a steady but efficient offense and a dominating defense, the Dons took the lead early and never looked back.

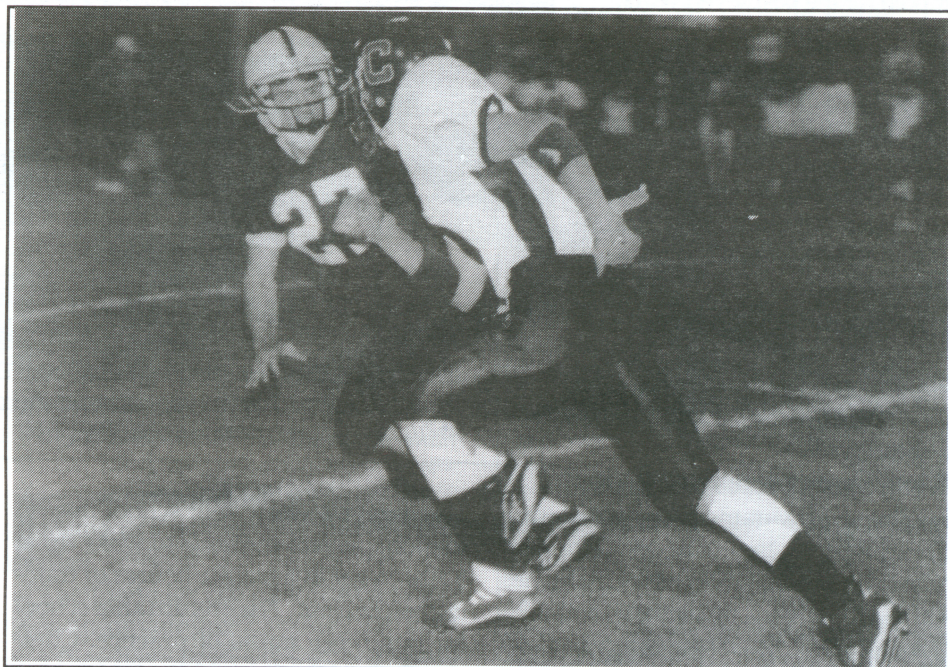
The offense, led by Junior quarterback Joe Bruzzone, scored 21 first half points.

Senior Andy Martin, ran for a two yard touchdown up the middle. Senior Brandon Blalock, caught a 51 yard pass from Bruzzone to take a 14-0 lead in the middle of the second quarter. With a minute left in the second quarter, the Dons took advantage of a careless Mt. Diablo turnover to score their third touchdown of the half with a nine yard run by Bruzzone.

Mt. Diablo tried to make a game out of it when they scored a quick six points early in the third quarter. The Dons didn't even wince as they later scored again on another bomb from Bruzzone to Blalock over the middle to increase their lead to 27-6. Acalanes then milked the clock by running the ball the rest of the game.

What was impressive in this game was not only how Acalanes bounced back from a tough loss to Campo, the previous Friday at Acalanes, but how they won the game without key players.

Their star running back, Senior Corey Hardin, broke his right arm in a loss to Campo, ending most of his season. Offensive guard, Senor Garlan Ng also did not play because of a strained knee. Other key players missing included Senior Mark Miller and Juniors Zack Blackman, Ryan Mannion, Brian Roth-



Blueprint Photo/Sophia Maund

Senior Karl Salocks attempts to block a cougar player in the Acalanes 24-6 loss to Campolindo.

enberg, Justin Rohrs among others .

Friday night the Dons proved that they are a team that does not rely on their star player to win games for us. Quarterback Bruzzone said the team "definitely can win without key players." Bruzzone also said, "It has a lot to do with practice. Last week we had an excellent week of practice and it showed."

Coach Pat Smith said, "You know when you're missing that many key players, it hurts everything. But when you have people down, you've got to have others that can step up and that's what we've got."

The first week of the season, the Dons beat up on Hayward with 35-13 win at Acalanes High School. The key play-

ers in the game were Hardin who had 207 yards and four touchdowns to lead the team.

Junior Zack Blackman said, "I think this win sends a message to the league that we are for real and we are one of the top teams in the league."

The Dons have been given a perfect opportunity to send a big message to the league. Although it's early in the season, they are missing key players and like it or not, the team will have to show everyone just what kind of depth they have.

Will the Dons continue their winning ways or will they just be another team in the league? The win over Mt. Diablo strongly suggests that they are a contender.

BOYS WATERPOLO

Can Dons End Matadors' Reign?

By Quinn Fitzgerald
Staff Writer

"This is the year!" said senior Danny Holligan referring to the year when the Acalanes Dons will overpower the Miramonte Matadors, who have won the North Coast championships in men's water polo for the past seven years.

In past seasons Miramonte has outplayed the Dons, but after beating the Mats in a scrimmage early this season, senior Conner Deal said, "This really pumped us up...we could win Coast this year." Even Miramonte coach Bill Brown said, "The scrimmage proved Acalanes is the team to beat."

Two years ago the team made it to the North Coast finals, losing only to Miramonte in the championship game. Last year in an upset Acalanes didn't even finish and again Miramonte took the title. This year Miramonte is graduating four of their six starters, and the Dons are losing only their starting goalie. Acalanes has the best shot at victory in years. Acalanes coach Brian Monte has coached the team for the last five years and said, "The six starters are the best we've ever had."

The varsity team began their week

long, twice daily trainings sessions referred to as hell week last month before school started.

These training sessions involved intense swimming for nearly an hour and muscle grinding drills and scrimmages.



Senior Trevor Wagner maneuvers around the opposition to make a pass to his teammate.

Three days a week with school now in session, players continue to wake up at 5 AM to get in a couple hours of training before class. They return after school for two more hours of practice. Commenting on the brutal schedule, senior Patrick Riley said, "Our eagerness to train is motivated by obsessive hunger for North Coast victory."

At the John Schmidt Tournament two weeks ago at Menlow College, the Dons walked away with three wins and two losses. The losses, however, were both due to goals scored in the final seconds. The leading scorers were seniors Trevor Wagner, Danny Holligan, Patrick Riley, and Conner Deal. Robert Barter, the only sophomore starter, scored the game-winning goal in their win against Jesuit High school. Further losses in the Acalanes Tournament last weekend "were very discouraging" said junior Patrick Dodd, but adds that "the team is still confident in its potential."

Junior Matt Saget, in only his second year playing, has trained to be this year's starting goalie. Three weeks into this season he has emerged as one of the top goalies in the league. When asked what accounts for his rapid improvement Saget said, "It's a great sport and I've been training with some of the best players around."

According to Coach Monte, "the team lacks depth." But he also has faith in his starting six who have a lot of experience and will be well prepared to battle Miramonte, or any other team for the North Coast title by the end of the season.

GIRLS WATERPOLO

Lady Dons Make A Pre-Season Splash

By Nathalie Krastev and
Kristy Mayer
Staff Writers

Starting off the season with a splash, the girl's water polo team exhibited an excellent performance in its scrimmage against San Ramon Saturday, September 4, with a score of 4-4, proving the upcoming season could be very successful.

The team definitely has experience with the return of several key players

such as seniors Sonia Lames, the team's number one defender, Anne Olson, Grace Woods, Elaine Nourse, and Renee Harris. In addition to the returning players, four new sophomores, Molly Mehaffey, Lindsey Jenkins-Stark, Lizzy Straw, and Leila Andrews have proven their abilities and have contributed their speed and strength to the team. Coach Michael McAlister says that overall this year's team is very solid and talented.

The team's main rival this year is Miramonte. The Miramonte and Acalanes teams have been training together through

out the summer, and McAlister says, "It's a healthy rivalry." He and the players are confident that the team has a great chance of beating Miramonte, despite having never beaten them before. "All our swimmers are excellent," says junior Nickie Torres. This is a factor that will greatly contribute to the team's success against Miramonte.

McAlister would like to capitalize on the team's speed, strength, and coordination. He is planning on pushing the team to its limits, "To win would be the icing," says McAlister.

CROSS COUNTRY

Cross-Country Off To A Running Start

By Chris Kim and
 Danny Ebert
Staff Writers

Attitude—the little thing that makes a big difference. Coach Manny Myers sees the determined attitude of this year's team, and he's excited. This year's Cross Country team, with 146 runners, is the biggest team ever at Acalanes, and also the biggest team in Northern California. Although Campolindo and Miramonte have large teams, their numbers don't exceed 110 runners.

Large numbers are exciting, but the thing that Coach Myers is most excited about is the attitude of the team. "Going back probably six years, we haven't had a team this spirited, this willing to really put the miles in, and the first two races we've had we've had over eighty kids in both where we used to average about sixty kids," said Meyers.

Returning varsity level runners such as seniors Nikala Prowznik and Sumi Kim are joined by new talent such as freshmen Alex Shogan, Val Vradenberg, Roxanne Croze, and Chase Facer. Coach Myers believes that the solid mix of boys have a good chance of taking first place overall.

Varsity runners, sophomore Royce Anderson and senior Darryl Wong are excited about this year's team. They've noticed that the determination and spirit are stronger than that of teams in the past. "Kids aren't just running two miles so they can get home early. They're really working hard putting in a lot of miles to improve their pace and speed," said Wong. JV runner Alex Baca has also detected a strong sense of determination in this year's team. "We're more committed this year than in past years. I think we'll do really well this season," Baca replied.

Evidence of the strong team was seen in the Ed Sias Invitational, where the varsity boys finished sixth, JV boys took fourth, and frosh/soph boys took second, and frosh boys finished fifth. Frosh runners, Shogan and Croze, are contributing a lot of talent to this year's team. Shogan finished his race in 11:21, setting a new record in the top tens list of best times at the Hidden Valley course. Croze finished with a time of 14:11. Cross



Blueprint Photo/Will McCosker

Junior Jake Nicholson leads all competitors in the Adidas Invitational on September 18.

country should prove to be very intense. The team's new talent will be looking to set new records. Meets will be larger than ever due to record turnouts, and the Acalanes

home course will even see some action. This was not possible in previous years due to construction at Springhill Elementary School.

SOCCER

NCS Champs Start Season On Right Foot

By Danielle Cooke
Staff Writer

Pressure and expectation loomed over the heads of the boys varsity soccer team as they took the field Tuesday, Sep. 14 for their first game of the '99-'00 season.

As North Coast Champions last year, their performance was nothing less than spectacular. This year, however, may be a little different. With the loss of 10 seniors, including TCAL player of the year, Sean Parks, the boys will have to work hard this year to achieve their ultimate goal: to win NCS again.

Not only will the loss of seniors be a crucial factor to the year, but the Dons will also have to deal with the loss of coach Ed Belingino. Due to personnel issues, Ed's whereabouts are not to be discussed. The new coach is Paul Curtis, father of senior Roger and sophomore Jeff Curtis. With little notice, Curtis stepped forward and gave the team a great sense of leadership. Co-captain senior Bret Boudreaux claims, "We all know Paul Curtis has a lot of coaching experience, and we are confident in his ability to lead this team."

This team is full of potential with five seniors, nine juniors and five sophomores. New addition to the team this year sophomore Scott Schwertscharf said, "I'm really excited to be on Acalanes varsity. Yeah, I'm really psyched and pumped up too. I'm stoked also."

Hopes are also high in the injury status. Junior Ryan Hafey is the only one not playing right now because of an ankle injury due to ligament damage, and he is due back in about a week.

Two games into the season, the Dons have one win and one tie. In their first game of the season, the Dons battled it out against Alhambra, and tied 1-1 on September 14 at Acalanes. Alhambra came up with a surprise goal around the thirtieth minute in the first half that sailed just out of reach of keeper Ryan Mathy. Up until then, neither team had very much action in the goal box. The only ample opportunity for the Dons came at the end of the first when a break came for sophomore Nick Allen towards the end of the first half, but unfortunately Alhambra keeper came up with a save. The Dons finally came through in the second when Brian Zuckerman scored off a cross to give the Dons a tie. Allen said the final score was "very disappointing. We have much more potential as a team."

Acalanes beat Campolindo 1-0 on Sep. 16 at Campolindo giving them a

record of one win and one tie. Again the presence of Zuckerman seemed essential as he scored in the second half to present the Dons with their first win of the season. The only threat for the Cougars was senior Nick Ramirez. Even though he seemed dangerous the defense consisting of senior Nic Johnson, sophomore Chris Watson, junior Matt Johnson and Curtis held their ground. Mathy also stood tough and brought his team a shutout with his commanding saves. The Cougar offense was allowed very few opportunities with the awesome Acalanes' defense.

The season is looking successful and we are hoping for another exciting one from the Dons. Jeff Curtis says, "every team will probably be coming for us, but I think we'll be able to pull it together and win it again."



Junior Matt Johnson skillfully maneuvers the ball in an attempt to advance against the Campolindo defense.

Blueprint Photo/Sophia Maund

GIRLS TENNIS

Lady Dons Tennis Team Makes A Racket

By Myles Rush
Sports Editor

All the prerequisites are in place for an exceptional performance from the girls varsity tennis team this year.

When observed, the team has an abundance of enthusiasm, spirit, and commitment. The Lady Dons are definitely a front runner for one of the top four positions in the league. The other three contenders include Campolindo, Miramonte, and Las Lomas. "I think what is going to happen this year is that we're going to have a lot of close matches. I think that there are several teams that are very even: Las Lomas, Miramonte, Campolindo, and Acalanes," said the Campolindo coach.

The Acalanes team beat Alhambra convincingly 6-3 on Sep. 14 in their first match of the season, energizing them for their Campolindo and Miramonte games.

Senior Ashley O'Neil won her match 6-1, 6-0. Sophomore Nathalie Krastev destroyed her opponent 6-1, 6-3. Junior Emily Coor won a close match with a score of 4-6, 6-2, 7-5. With a score of 6-3, 6-2, sophomore Darcie Flansburg beat her opponent with ease. The great teamwork of juniors Alissa Rey and April Ho won their match 6-2, 6-4, and sophomores Maggie Coor and Ashley Landstra beat their opponents

6-4, 6-2.

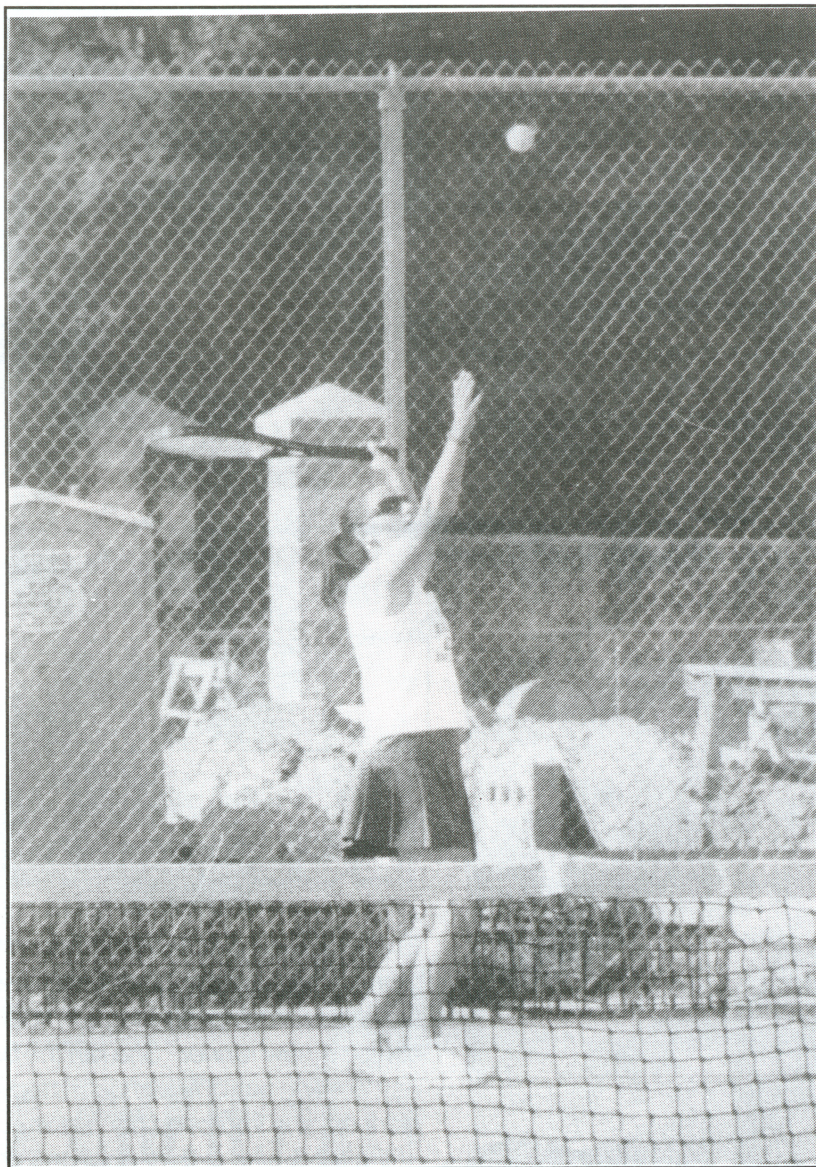
Campolindo, last year's league champions, beat Acalanes 6-3 on Sep. 16. In spite of the score, the doubles matches between the players were very close. Senior Ashley O'Neil, who came in second

said Acalanes coach Judy Corliss, who is now entering her fourth year with the team.

Acalanes' destructive duo, juniors Leah Smith and Paige Momsen, tore down their Campo opponents, Stephanie Peers and Jennie Metzler 6-4, 2-6, 7-5. Campolindo has a 2-0 record so far this year, and matches between Acalanes and Campo are always very competitive and close in score. "Playing Acalanes always seems to give us heart attacks, but they're fun heart attacks because their girls are really outstanding players...We always look forward to playing Acalanes," said Campolindo's coach.

The Dons' tennis team lost a great opportunity to establish their dominance on Sep. 21, when they lost to a very tough Miramonte team 7-2. O'Neil accomplished yet another victory against Miramonte's Yvonne Szudelski 4-0, (retired). In double matches number seniors Jessie Potts and Cicely Andree just barely edged out a win against Sophia Blueford and Verna Ho 6-8 (tie-breaker), 7-5, 7-5. Miramonte now has a record of 3-0 beating Las Lomas and Benicia as well as Acalanes. Last year Miramonte played against Campolindo for the league championship, but lost.

"We have a very young team, only five seniors and four freshman...We're just trying to find the right combination, and once we do, I think we're going to win the championship again this year," said Miramonte coach John Rodriguez, now in his twelfth year there.



Junior Leah Smith skillfully smashes the tennis ball onto her opponent's court with the greatest of ease.

place last year at North Coast and won the TCAL twice, took care of business in the number one singles spot, beating Campo's Cathy Blue 6-1, 6-3. "She's doing great..Her game has improved a lot,"

four freshman...We're just trying to find the right combination, and once we do, I think we're going to win the championship again this year," said Miramonte coach John Rodriguez, now in his twelfth year there.

Blueprint Photo/Sophia Maund

ATHLETES OF THE ISSUE

Corey Hardin

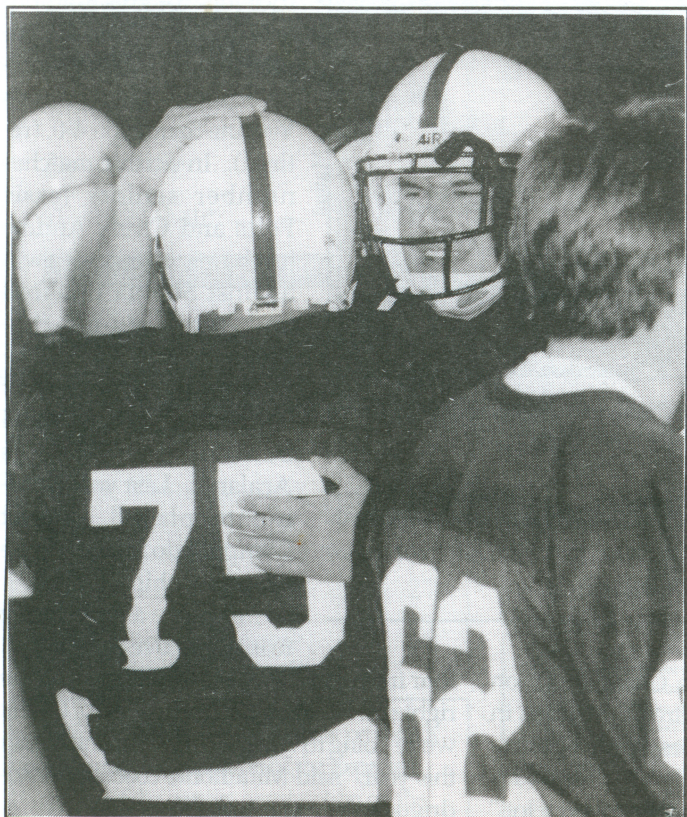
When he was not leading the league in rushing last year, hitting the NCS up for 1,061 yards, or earning the honor of being the seventh best in rushing in the East Bay, he was stepping in as a great team leader and motivator. In addition to running 1,061 yards last year, he completed 12 touchdowns and averaged 5.3 yards per carry. Senior running back Corey Hardin has been on the varsity team since he was a sophomore. He is this year's team captain, and holds the honor for this Blueprint's Male Athlete of the Issue. "He lifts a lot of weights, trains real hard, works real hard. He's a good inspiration for everybody (and is) always doing something to make himself better," said coach Pat Smith. In the season opener against Hayward, he completed 207 yards for four touchdowns. Hardin scored one touchdown against Campo before he injured his leg picking up a blitz to protect the quarterback three minutes into the third quarter. "He did his job, he picked up the blitz," said coach Smith. He also said that even though Corey will not be playing now, he will still be substantially involved with the team.



Blueprint Photo/Joanna Dalhausser

Terra Senter

Everyone was pleasantly surprised when junior cross country runner Terra Senter displayed an excellent performance at last year's frosh/soph league meet and emerged from that course a new runner. She ran the best race of her career that day, beating two of Miramonte's top seven athletes. From that point on, she improved her running, working her way into one of the top seven varsity positions on the team. "She ran this summer, and clearly invested in her running," said coach Manny Meyers. Senter placed in one of the top five on the team in the Ed Sias Invitational, Little Ed Invitational, and the Adidas Invitational. "Nobody...expected Terra to do what she did last year at league meet in cross country...She blew everybody away...including herself," said coach Meyers. For her hard work and perseverance, Terra Senter has earned the title of Blueprint's Female Athlete of the Issue.



Blueprint Photo/Will McCosker